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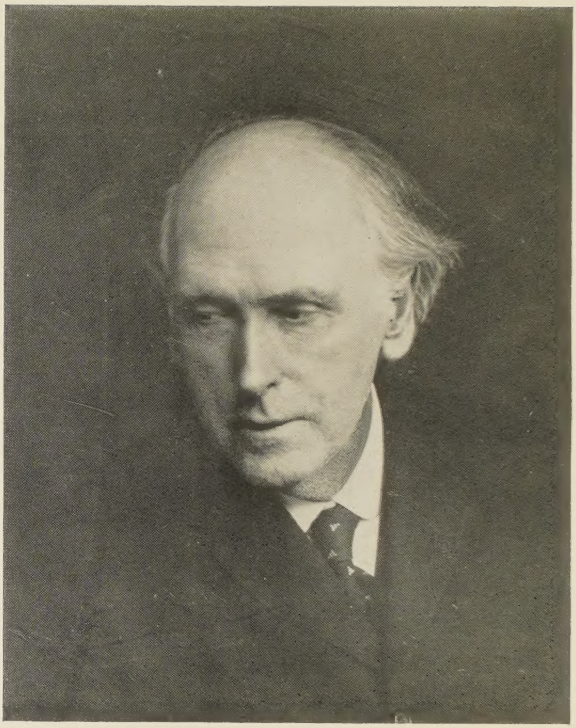

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Monthly Letters

by

William Poel.

55

Selected and arranged by A. M. T.

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Foreword.

MOST of the material in this book was first published by Mr. Poel in the form of single sheets which appeared monthly and were privately circulated among members of the London Shakespeare League and their friends. They dealt almost entirely with dramatic criticism and principally with the way in which the Plays of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists should be represented on the stage to-day. The originality and reasonableness of Mr. Poel's point of view, the liveliness and vigour of his style and the soundness of his judgment have given, it is believed, a permanent interest and value to what was by its nature technical and occasional, and it is for this reason that these papers have been collected under one cover.

Those who have already enjoyed the letters will, it is hoped, welcome them in their new setting, while those to whom they are new will find in the mind at work in them the unusual combination of actor and scholar, a writer with a strong historic and dramatic sense, whose

imaginative insight has enabled him to visualise Elizabethan times, with the men and women in their habits as they lived ; one who both re-creates for us the Elizabethan Shakespeare and throws more light on Shakespeare the artist.

Readers are referred to the marginal headings as a guide to the substance of the various letters, which have been here arranged, without regarding their chronological order, so as to group together as far as possible letters on kindred topics. Structural coherence is not to be looked for in a collection of this kind, but the unity of the work will appear in the clearly defined and fearlessly maintained point of view of the author.

A. M. T.

September, 1929.

IT IS more than thirty years since Salvini appeared for the last time in London, and to
1916. discuss the merits of an actor whom the majority of my readers may never have seen cannot in these days be regarded as up-to-date journalism. Since, however, the religion of wealth has turned the stage into a huge business for the exhibition of trivialities it may not seem out of place to record the doings of one who was the highest exponent of histrionic art in modern times, and who besides gave undeniable evidence of the inspiring and elevating possibilities of the theatre. It is no exaggeration to say that tragedy at its best produces in the spectator a deep-kindled emotion, because as the actual manifestation of man's spiritual energies it defeats any tendency towards pessimism. A striking illustration of this truth was given early in the nineteenth century, literary drama then holding the stage in Germany. For when *William Tell* was played for the first time, at the close of the play the deeply moved audience rushed into the street in order that it might be ready to receive the author when he left the theatre. And on Schiller's appearing there were no enthusiastic plaudits, no expressions of boisterous approval, but every voice was hushed and every head was bared, till he and his friends

A Great Tragedian.

had passed from sight. Now that is not the kind of tribute men pay to one who has merely
1916. contributed to their enlivenment; it is a tribute of reverential gratitude to a man who has helped them to solve something of the mystery of existence, and to walk life's path with a firmer step and a nobler purpose.

A Great Tragedian.

"What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" was the phrase perpetually dinned into my ears by those who did not understand why I went to the theatre in my young days. No one then knew with what awe I approached the shrine where Salvini stood in the likeness of a superhuman. The solemn impression which the beauty of the Cathedrals of Northern France once made on Morris and Burne-Jones was the means of stimulating their ambition to return to the ideals which had inspired the great works of the past. And it was the genius of the poet-dramatist, Shakespeare, and that of the actor, Salvini, who so finely interpreted some of his characters, which urged me to labour in the cause of the theatre.

It is well to bear in mind what was the condition of the English stage when Salvini first appeared in London. As regards Shakespeare's plays, the traditions and conventions of the eighteenth century were still in use. There were the same "readings," "business," and division of the dialogue into scenes, the same mutilation of the text and transposition of incidents, although Garrick's and Colley Cibber's perversions of the

text had been given up. The chief drawback lay in the English actor's want of imagination, and in
1916. his inability to appreciate the swiftness and ease with which the dialogue was spoken on the stage by Elizabethan actors. While rejecting the declamatory methods of Macready's time, the actors failed by more modern means to make the characters alive or interesting, and to avoid tameness they were obliged to force their own personality into prominence instead of that of the characters which ought to have been impersonated. One of the greatest offenders in this respect was Sir Henry Irving, whose physical and vocal limitations made it impossible for him to do justice to many parts in which he appeared. His genius, however, for stage-management brought his tableau methods into favour, and they had many imitators, so that managers vied with one another in the amount of money they spent on upholstery until the interest in Shakespeare's plays became largely one of finance for the stage setting.

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But there still remained some who cared for the art of the actor, so that it was possible in mid-Victorian days to see acting of a far higher order than any provided for the public to-day. The Kendals, the Bancrofts, Hare, Buckstone, the elder Compton, Dion Boucicault, were excellent actors in their own special class of modern plays; while Phelps and Vezin were remarkable for the ease and intelligence with which they spoke Shakespearian verse. Apart from these

artists, Charles Matthews, as a light comedian, Joseph Jefferson in pathetic comedy, or in parts
1916. displaying dry humour, were unapproachable in their style, and in the delicate subtlety of their art. Jefferson especially as Rip-Van-Winkle acquired world-wide fame. Londoners, moreover, had the opportunity of seeing companies of foreign actors with their highly-finished art, this being of considerable advantage to the playgoer since classical plays of all periods were acted by those artists with an imaginative insight and distinction in which—with few exceptions—English and American actors were sadly deficient. And notably was this the case in the Dutch actors from the National Theatre at Amsterdam, and in the German company from Meiningen, who, though noted for the beauty of their stage settings, never allowed the figures to sink into the background as was the case at the Lyceum, the artists being neither wanting in dramatic power nor in the gift of impersonation.

A Great Tragedian.

Then, too, the National Theatre in Paris from the time of Molière had held the first place on the Continent for dramatic achievements, and the appearance of its company in this country during the Franco-German War first taught English playgoers to value the application of the actor's talent to the task of elucidating the play rather than to emphasize personal characteristics. It is sad, therefore, to have to chronicle that the secession of Sarah Bernhardt and the elder Coquelin from the French National Theatre

marked the decline of French histrionic art, while the artistic fame of " the divine Sarah," as she
1916. was then inappropriately called, and of a far greater artist, Coquelin, was not thereby increased. Coquelin remained great only in such parts as he had played on the stage of the Rue Richelieu, and the ambitious Sarah early showed that her mind was set on exploiting the woman rather than the art of the actress. Indeed, in her performance of Phèdre in Racine's play she showed in her earliest days that she was unequal to the efforts of great tragedy.

A Great Tragedian.

Thus in 1875 I had many opportunities of seeing good acting, but a great tragic actor or actress I had not seen. Then, fortunately, it fell to my lot to see one who, in my opinion, touched the highest and noblest chords to which human emotions can respond, and that was the actor Salvini. But George Henry Lewes, in his book on " The Art of Acting," has so ably criticised both Salvini's acting and also that of the English actor, Edmund Kean, that it seems almost unnecessary to do more than call the reader's attention to Lewes's most interesting and illuminating comments. For his book is undoubtedly the best of its kind that has ever been written, or is ever likely to be written, even if one admits that it might fail to appeal to modern readers.

Acting is no longer an art. There is no fear to-day that an actor will terrify an actress on the stage as Edmund Kean is said to have once dismayed Mistress Glover when he was

impersonating Othello. The names of Kean and Salvini are only famous in present times by
1916. tradition. Conditions are too unfavourable for the display of such gifts as they possessed. For there has been a revolution in the theatre's economics. It is no longer the actor but the playwright or owner of the theatre who counts and becomes rich. To have the sole acting rights in a modern farce or melodrama may, indeed, in these days bring to the holder from twenty to forty thousand pounds. This pecuniary reward has set every fortune-hunter on the look-out for the possession of one of these money-making plays, and having found what he believes to be his "lucky" play he must needs secure for it the hallmark of a London production. The adventurer, therefore, engages a London theatre, at an extravagant rent, for, say, six weeks; he also provides a company of actors to rehearse the play. And although nine out of ten of these experiments are failures, there are still always fresh applicants waiting at the stage door, willing to risk capital on a similar venture.

A Great Tragedian.

The state of affairs, then, with the theatres of to-day, is that men—most of whom care nothing about the art of the theatre—own the people's houses of amusement and let them out to those who want to make use of them for the purpose of a money gamble, just as they would use a horse on the racecourse. The actors, in my opinion, are at fault. They should urge for legislation which would prevent the mere speculator from renting

a theatre or engaging a company of actors for a shorter term than for a year. It needs legisla-
1916. tion of this kind to clear the mere gambler out of the theatrical business. Then he would have to stake his venture not upon one play but upon six at least, while he would have to engage actors who are *bona-fide* trained men and women. There is no training-school for actors possible while the present commercial system is tolerated.

A Great Tragedian.

With regard to Salvini's impersonations, one reference should be made to what is generally overlooked, although George Lewes has not failed to mention the matter. Undoubtedly Salvini's finest achievement was in the part of Hamlet, for which part his physique so obviously ill-fitted him. To me his Hamlet, notwithstanding physical disqualifications, was perhaps the first representation given on the stage that conformed to the actual play, for Salvini was sufficiently a scholar to defy the traditional rendering if it made nonsense of the text. And it is surprising as well as disappointing to think that our English actors should have failed to take advantage of Salvini's brilliant readings. On this point Lewes writes, " I think of all the Hamlets I have seen, Salvini's is the least disappointing. Of all that I have seen, it has the greatest excellences. The soliloquies were quiet and were real soliloquies . . . . The scene with Polonius, ' Words, words,' admirable. . . . The scene with Ophelia was a revelation . . . . The growing intensity of emotion during the play scene was a truthful expres-

sion of powerful emotion . . . . No more pathetic death has been seen on the stage . . . ."

1916. I myself have never failed to uphold that Salvini's impersonation of Hamlet was the only perfect one that has been given within living memory, and possibly one more in harmony with Shakepeare's intentions than that presented during the author's lifetime—not so much as a perfect impersonation of Shakespeare's Hamlet, as an intelligent reading of the text.

DIDEROT'S faith in the conventions of the stage is deep-rooted. He believes that nothing hap-

1917. pens on the boards exactly as it happens in nature; that "nature" without art is impossible. The actor's impersonations must accordingly fit the artificial surroundings of the play-house. The comedy of the drawing-room, he thinks, is too evanescent for the stage, while the satire of the stage is too bitter for use in everyday life, because real beings exact more consideration than imaginary ones. What, then, is truth for stage purposes? It is the conforming of action, diction, face, voice, movement, and gesture to an ideal type invented by the poet and frequently enhanced by the player. Art, in fact, must be nature improved. It is not enough, says Diderot, to see fury on the stage, but we wish to see fury well played. All the violent passions lend them-

The Actor's Art.

selves to grimace, and these a tasteless actor will copy but too faithfully, while a great actor will
1917. avoid them. His passion has a definite course—it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. A really unhappy woman, he thinks, may weep and fail to excite sympathy; some trivial disfigurement in her may even raise a laugh. An accent which is natural to her may sound dissonant and vexatious, a movement which is habitual to her may make her grief show ignobly. Nor does he think the stage admits of a stifled, sobbing declamation, since an audience does not come to see tears, but to hear speeches that draw tears.

The Actor's Art.

In advocating idealism, moreover, Diderot rightly enlarges on the advantages of training. If nature bestows personal gifts, it is study and experience which perfect them. The actor who stands in the wing without his whole scheme of acting in his head, his whole part mapped out, will, Diderot says, be all his life a beginner. Or if, endowed with intrepidity, self-sufficiency, and spirit, he relies too much on his quickness of wit and the habit of his calling, he may be effective with his fire and the intoxication of his emotions, but the audience will applaud him much as an expert of painting might smile at a fine sketch, where all was indicated but nothing delineated. Accents, he says, are more easily mimicked than actions, but actions appeal to an audience more effectively than words. If you would avoid coldness you must complete your speech by action.

As to rehearsals, Diderot thinks that it is not until the actors are worn out with them, or what
1917. he calls used up, that the members of the company begin really to understand each other and to act. From this moment their progress is surprising; each identifies himself with his part, and it is at the end of this hard work that the performances begin to "go," while the audience then enjoys the highest pleasure that can be obtained from a stage illusion. But, besides training, Diderot demands a long and close acquaintance with the boards. The actor does not reach his topmost height until he has had a long experience. He must pass into the meridian of life before he can become a fine player. Then he may sit with folded arms in his easy chair, and, following memory's dream, hear himself, see himself, and judge himself, and also judge the effect his acting will produce on others. In the evening of life, when the actor's talents are matured by continuous devotion to his calling, he of all others may be said to grow old gracefully. But let him not be tempted to reappear in public after a lengthened absence from the stage; his acting will then be but moderate—not because he has become deficient in sensibility (Diderot thinks he never should have had any), but because he is no longer able to remember his methods.

The Actor's Art.

STAGE gesture* as an art has ceased to exist in this country and, I am afraid, on the Continent
1922. also. The reason is that it takes a great deal of time and study to bring it to perfection.

Stage Gesture.

A stage manager at the Haymarket Theatre who was teaching me elocution in the 'seventies said he could get my voice right in two years but that it would take seven years to get my movements right. All voluntary movement on the proscenium stage is ineffective and, however natural, looks awkward for two reasons: (1) because the person himself cannot *see* his action; and (2) because the position he finds himself in, with 500 or 1,000 people seated facing him in a confined area is not a natural condition.

Gesture follows the law of nature only in so far as nature shows the kind of movement needed. But nature does not ensure that the gesture will be a graceful one, or that it shall add any meaning to the word spoken. The actor's exhibition of his art is altogether independent of his own emotional condition. Perhaps it is the only time in his life that he finds himself in a position in which he cannot do what he feels he would like to do. If he does do it, it will be sure to be the wrong movement.

Whether the action is appropriate or not the effect can only be determined by the

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* Notes for an illustrated Lecture.

spectator, since he alone sees it. Thus stage gesture is an art in that the audience
1922. must at once recognise without labour what the gesture means; and on the stage all gesture is misapplied that does not add some meaning to the words spoken. Gesture which is unintelligible is false and ugly and can never give pleasure.

Stage Gesture

In India the study of gesture is regarded as a religion, and it might well be so, for only those who are in love with their art and take it seriously would undergo the very severe training needed to bring the art to perfection. So seriously is the dancer's art regarded in India that no dancer ties the bells upon her ankles before dancing without first touching her forehead and eyes with the bells and repeating a brief prayer.

What distinguishes the professional actor from the amateur is that the former understands the necessity for studying stage gesture and the latter does not.—Movement to be effective on the stage, must be very sparingly used.—The part of the body first to arrest attention is naturally the head, because it reveals the mind, and the expression of the face is its index. Words follow, they do not precede, gesture. When you are surprised, you do not say " Oh " as you start. You start first and say " Oh " afterwards. The hands are in conflict with the head if they are demonstrative while the mind is

placid. This conflict means that both hands and head are endeavouring to arrest individual atten-
1922. tion.—More often than not the actor's hands should be in a placid position, so as not to take attention away from the facial expression. The hands and the rest of the body must be carefully arranged—that is, artificially posed, and unobtrusive.—In cases of mental deficiency the hands are active; they try to do what the mind cannot—that is, to express something definite.—A great actor will never cross his arms on the stage unless there is some imperative reason for his doing so, and then only when he is seated in an attitude of repose.

WHENEVER music becomes a matter of public interest, as in concerts and operas, *performance*
1923. is the principal attraction; nearly all the eminent musicians whom the public knows, are known only as performers, and the great mass of musical teaching and learning that goes on in private has performance in view and nothing more. Now it was exactly the same with drama in Shakespeare's time. Dramatists had no other object in view than *performance,* and the public judged the merits of a play by its performance. When the play became successful, to the extent that it was repeatedly acted, then, and not till then, did it get into print.

Spoken Verse.

In Elizabethan days, however, the vehicle in use for expressing drama was chiefly verse, which was often of a quality that to-day is regarded as literature. Yet it was poetry which was built up purely upon a human basis. As Russell Lowell, the American poet, has so well expressed it— "As soon as there is a gap between the speech of books and that of life, the language becomes so far as poetry is concerned as dead as Latin."

Spoken Verse.

George Lewes, our greatest dramatic critic, says that every actor must endeavour to give to the poetry he is speaking on the stage some resemblance to the intonations used in conversation or no reality can be created. Now in order to give to Shakespeare's poetry on the stage an impression of spontaneity it is necessary to bear in mind that when dramatic dialogue is written in verse there are more words put into a sentence than are needed to convey the actual thought that is uppermost in the speaker's mind. The actor, therefore, by means of modulation and inflection of voice, should arrest the attention of the listener by the accentuation of those words which convey the central idea or thought of the speech he is uttering, and should keep in the background the redundant words with which that thought is ornamented. It is not easy, however, to decide which are the most suitable words to make prominent in a speech. Not until the whole play has been carefully read over many times, and the relative connexion of the many incidents to each other and to the whole has been grasped, will it be possible

to discover what are the right " readings." The fault of English actors in Shakespeare is over-
1923. emphasis, which tends to rob a sentence of its meaning. Most actors, if they emphasise the right words will stress the wrong ones too, so that the thought which lies behind the speaker's words is not expressed.

Spoken Verse.

Here is an illustration taken from some lines of *Macbeth* :—

" or *why*
Upon this *blasted* heath you *stop* our *way*
With *such* prophetic *greeting?*"

In this sentence it is usual to speak the words in italics as if they were all equally important, except that, generally, there is given a double emphasis on the word " blasted." But what did Shakespeare intend the sentence to mean? The witches are standing in the middle of the path, barring Macbeth's return to the King's camp, and the chieftain says :—

" or WHY
Upon this blasted heath you STOP our way
With such PROPHETIC greeting?"

Now there are only three words that need vocal inflection in the sentence, with the emphasis either upon " stop " or " prophetic." If these three words are rapped out and heard distinctly the listener understands what is going on in Macbeth's thoughts. The radical fault, then, of our speaking of Shakespeare's verse on the stage is due to the notion that because the accent of

the verse comes at regular intervals the emphasis must also come at regular intervals. Yet all con-
1923. versation would be impossible if a rule of this kind were adhered to. For instance, the sentence "Are you going out to-day?" as it appears in print is obscure because it has no definite meaning: the writer of the words, unfortunately, has not made clear to the reader what he wanted to say, and to make his meaning clear he would have to add more words than he has written. But if the words as they stand are to be spoken and not read, then no additional ones are needed because the actor by the tones of his voice can convey to the listener what are the missing words. He can say:—

Spoken Verse.

Are YOU going out to-day?—or—
Are you going OUT to-day?—or—
Are you going out TO-DAY?

And each one of those tones conveys to the listener a different meaning, although the position of no single word in the sentence has been altered. When, then, a manager tells a would-be dramatist that his play is no good, because "the words won't speak," what does he mean? He means that the author has a literary, and not a dramatic, sense, and by putting an unnecessary number of words into his dialogue he fogs the actor, and deprives him of the possibility of giving vocal expression to the written words.

It is obvious, therefore, that Shakespeare, being himself an actor, must have understood the value

of the key-word in a sentence, and recognised the difficulty the actor often has in finding it. Did he
1923. then provide the actor with some intimation as to where to find the key-word of his sentences? Now in the First Folio some words are printed with a capital for the first letter which not even in Elizabethan days were so spelt. Such as " Within " in Hamlet's line, " But I have that Within which passeth show," and the word " Velvet " in Malvolio's line, " Seated in my Velvet gown." And the F in Frowns in the *Cymbeline* line, " There is not a man we meet but Frowns." Then we have the word " Here " in Macbeth's speech printed with a capital H in the line " That but this blow might be the *be-all* and *end-all* Here," the last word having a strong emphasis upon it. And apparently the compositor, not realising the object of the capital, puts a full stop just before the word, which alters the meaning and necessitates a pause on the penultimate word of the line, a form of punctuation which Shakespeare does not use anywhere else in the play.

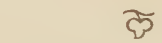
Spoken Verse.

Shakespeare, therefore, being conscious that speech to ring true on the stage must have key-words, must also have realised that even in beautiful passages of poetry some sacrifice had to be made if the central thought of the speech was to be brought home to the audience. And this, I take it, is what he meant when he put the words into the mouth of Hamlet, " Speak the speech, I pray you, as I *pronounced* it to you, trippingly on the tongue, for if you mouth it as many of

your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines." Well, how does the town crier speak?

1923. All on one note! When we talk, though, about speaking Shakespeare's words *trippingly* we must remember that modern pronunciation does not fit in with blank verse, where each syllable must have a definite sound. We can't, for instance, in verse say the word " Róses " as we speak it to-day. Olivia must say, " Cesario, by the Ró-ses of the Spring." And we cannot in verse say the word " Beautiful " as we pronounce it to-day. Olivia must say, " Oh, what a deal of scorn looks Beú-ti-fúl." But critics, unfortunately, often hold up the actors to ridicule for elongating their syllables in verse, and this is very much to be regretted. *Spoken Verse.*

Shakespeare must have known that not one of the sentences that he wrote in his plays had its full meaning without the help of the actor's intonation. And, if so, he also knew that the life and soul of his work could only be realised on the stage with the help of the highly-trained actor's voice.



1922. At the Oxford Clarendon Press in 1911 there was published a small volume written by Mr. Percy Simpson, of Oriel College, Oxford, called " Shakespearian Punctuation." This book made some stir among Shakespearian scholars, *Tones not Stops.*

and Dr. Alfred W. Pollard called special attention to it in his "Shakespeare's Fight with the
1922. Pirates," published in 1920. Here he states:—

> "In plays, wherever punctuation becomes important it might perhaps best be called 'dramatic.' To get at its underlying principle we may go back to the lessons of the schoolroom, in which I learnt that when a comma stopped the way I must pause while I could count one; when a semi-colon, while I could count two; when a colon, three; when a full stop, four. Educational formulas are long-lived, and it is possible that this simple rule of thumb, which made each stop simply and solely a measure of time, came down from Elizabethan days. It is certainly quite inapplicable to modern punctuation. Anyone who read aloud and marked his stops like this would risk having things thrown at him. In reading aloud we ignore many of the stops with which grammarians have taught printers to pepper our pages. The stops may sometimes save us from mistaking the sense, but they give hardly any clue as to how a given passage should be 'taken,' and it is precisely this which the punctuation of the First Folio attempted to do—and, at least occasionally, did . . . ."

Tones not Stops.

The upshot of both Dr. Pollard's and Mr. Simpson's remarks may be said to be this—that the old punctuation enabled poets to express subtle differences of tone, and that the beauty

of the rhythm was heightened and the phrasing touched a deeper meaning if the voice rested
1922. for a moment " after the words with the unusual pointing."

Commenting on these remarks in *The Times Literary Supplement* for February 3, 1921, I showed that Coquelin, the great French actor, and Talma, the tragedian, both attached no importance to punctuation. Talma says : " The hunting for the key-word gives you the eyes of a lynx in searching all the corners of the sentence, and compels you to study closely the *thought* of the author and to weigh *all* his words." Moreover, Coquelin states : " When I have to create a part, I begin reading the play with the greatest attention *five* or *six* times." The italics are mine. Indeed, no actor can make his part live until he has mastered the inmost meaning of every sentence he has to speak, so that at last he can truthfully say he knows more about his part than does the author who wrote it. Who, then, should first be called into consultation on any question to do with a dead dramatist's plays, if not those who have acted in them?

Tones not Stops.

Moreover, Sir Edward Sullivan, writing in the *Nineteenth Century* recently, admitted that " The time has at last come—long though it has been in coming—for a complete alteration of all our so-called standard texts of Shakespeare—so far, at least, as the punctuation of those texts is concerned." Here, therefore, is the need declared by the academics themselves for such

a change. In the name of Shakespeare and in the interests of drama, actors should demand
1922. that they be represented on the Board of Advisers regarding any text which is expected to command public support.

Tones not Stops.

Actors never can abrogate their right to claim Shakespeare as their fellow, nor forget that they are personally responsible to the public for the justice and honour, or the lack of either, that is meted out to him, and more especially for the invaluable legacy Shakespeare left in their custody. And here we may well tender our thanks to Sir Israel Gollancz, who has discovered the only contemporary notice so far known that shows recognition of the signal service rendered by Heminge and Condell in giving to the world the First Folio. I quote the lines from *The Times* where, I believe, they appeared for the first time in print :—

> To my good friends, Mr. John Heminge and Henry Condell.
>
> To you that jointly with undaunted paines
> Vouchsafe to chant to us these noble straines :
> How much you merit by it is not said,
> But you have pleased the living, loved the dead,
> Raised from the womb of earth a richer mine
> Than Cortés could with all his Casteline
> Associates. They did but dig for gold,
> But you for treasure much more manifold.

Finally, actors must not forget that Dr. Pollard

is of opinion that all Shakespeare's original manuscripts became "prompt copies," and that
1922. therefore such portions of the originals as can be identified should be subjected to the criticism of those who are in the habit of handling copies which were written not for the Press, but for the theatre.

NOT ONLY can children be taught acting, but better results can sometimes be obtained from
1918. teaching them than are possible when the same time and trouble are devoted to "grown-ups." Many years ago some French children appeared at the Criterion Theatre in Opera-Bouffe, and created a sensation among London playgoers. For spontaneity in voice and action, for an expression of pure joyous comedy, without exaggeration or buffoonery, nothing so delightfully naïve and yet subtle had been seen before. Unfortunately, the demands of English theatrical managers, due to the heavy cost of rental and advertising, exacted the usual toll of eight performances weekly. This proved too severe a physical strain upon the children, and their artistry soon lost its freshness. Yet these performances showed what a high development of histrionic talent is possible in children where there is intelligent selection and training. They also helped one to understand why the Queen's

Children as Actors.

choristers in Ben Jonson's satirical comedies at Blackfriars proved formidable rivals to the Globe
1918. players.

Owing to the kindness of a head-master opportunity was recently found for making some experiments with girls and boys in a mixed school. For this purpose, Shakespeare's interlude, *The Comedy of Errors,* was chosen, and for two reasons : first, because the verse contains a good deal of rhyme, and is written in varied metre, thus needing considerable modulation and inflection of voice, so as to bring the words approximately within imitation of ordinary speech ; and, secondly, because the dramatic interest of the comedy depending more upon farcical incident than upon impersonation of character, the play seemed better adapted to the temperament of children.

Children as Actors.

The preparation of *The Comedy of Errors,* for performance by Jewish children chosen from a mixed school of girls and boys, was a unique experience. The animated youngsters did not regard their task as class instruction. They refused to sit down, or to sit still, or to leave off talking, or to pay attention to what anyone else was saying or doing when they had nothing to do themselves. No doubt an appeal to the head teacher might have altered matters, but it would not have bettered them. It was essential that the children should not take a dislike to their new work, or tire of it, since there was a good deal of wearying detail to be mas-

tered. At the same time the prospect of obtaining a satisfactory performance seemed hopeless.
1918. Actors are like figures on a chessboard; everyone must stand or sit in an alloted place, there must be no fidgeting, and everyone must appear to be listening to the character who at the moment is speaking on the stage. This is exactly what these children did not do, and would not do, so that the play had to be rehearsed throughout in a din of noise and "larking," which to the onlookers created an impression of hopeless confusion. With these heavy drawbacks to face the result was startling—for the performance was far above the average. In fact, in no production for which I have been responsible during my many years of professional life has Shakespeare's verse been spoken with more spontaneity or with a finer appreciation of what his words meant. The acting, too, was equally intelligent and expressive. In spite of all the "larking," the children's minds had been alert, for they had not only taken in all that was told them and that was shown them, but they understood the "why and the wherefore" of what they were doing. That trait which on the English stage is so rarely appreciated, artistic restraint, seemed to come naturally to these children. It was delightful to hear words spoken such as "Go fetch it, sister," and "On, Officer, to prison," without accentuation and in an undertone, and with a gesture that conveyed the meaning even more effectually than the words.

Children as Actors.

THE performances of *The Tempest* and *Richard III.* by the Angmering Players deserve recognition. They were directed by those who had dramatic intelligence, and the method of production adopted was obviously Elizabethan, embodying, as it did, a simple and direct action, with a spontaneous delivery, which was at least praiseworthy as an effort. Thus the audience was brought more immediately in contact with the constructive and artistic purpose of the dramatist than is possible when the traditional stage methods are those of the eighteenth century with its star system, or those of the picture stage, with its theatrical devices of lighting. Never, perhaps, on the English professional stage—except at the Old Vic.—and seldom on the amateur stage—have there been acted two plays of Shakespeare's better calculated than those produced at Angmering to remove the reproach begotten of three centuries of ignorant folly, as shown in the modern methods of presenting Elizabethan drama. In a wooden shanty by the sea, playgoers were brought close up to the poet's work, and this was due mainly to the skill and intelligence of the performers.

1925. *Barnstormers.*

The quality of the representations was on a high level because the company realised that their business was not to act—the stage was too small for that—but to speak the words Shakespeare had written for them to say, in the way he wanted them said, and thus to allow the author to tell his own story as he wished it to be

told, without the modifications so often made by actor and scene-painter and the use of limelight.

1925. That the comedy on the whole was a more successful performance than the tragedy goes without saying. Prose is easier to speak than verse, and comedy is mostly written in prose. But there is high-comedy as well as low-comedy. In the play of *The Tempest* the difficult scenes for the actors are those in which Alonso and his courtiers appear. Here Shakespeare, to get variety into his play, introduces a new kind of vocalisation by way of contrast to the comic notes of the clowns. It is something different in sound to anything he has used before. Gonzalo and the two knights are speaking—Gonzalo to the Duke out of respect and sympathy for Alonso's bereavement, and Antonio and Sebastian to each other in contempt of Gonzalo's sentimental twaddle. The knights' chaff is not whispered, but uttered in crisp, low tones, each little sentence being strongly marked by a single emphasis. The audience, as listener—from the other side of the fence as it were—having its attention held fast by the spell of mysterious voices, becomes conscious of nothing else. Probably these scenes have never yet been spoken on the stage with the dramatic effect intended by the poet. At Angmering, it should be added, Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano, were acted by three inimitable comedians.

Barnstormers.

And it says something for the versatility of these young actors that there was no obtrusion of

the comic element in their performance of *Richard III.* In fact, where there was oppor-
1925. tunity for the display of subtle irony, in the speeches of the King, none was used. Altogether, apart from some shortcomings, the performance was most interesting in its revelation of Shakespeare's craft, he being the final and sole reviser of the tragedy after it left Marlowe's hands. It is Shakespeare's ethical sensitiveness that permeates the construction of the whole play. It is his study of the psychology of crime that is evidenced in the portraits of the four unhappy women, victims of Richard's treachery, who alternately are Chorus or Fury in the toils of his evil destiny. It was indeed a creditable achievement, histrionically, that these young Angmering players should have acted the whole of such a long play in the space of three hours. And, more than that, they left stamped on the minds of the audience an indelible impression of the tragic significance of Shakespeare's drama,—one of guilt and murder, shown in Richard's vain endeavour to seize and hold, by criminal means, the ancient throne of England's Kings.

Barnstormers.

" The heroines were quite adequately taken by
1916. two young Tommies, and one realised how easy it must have been for the Elizabethan stage-manager with no woman to bother him. In fact

Women Actors.

I now doubt whether the artistic gain of women entering the profession is sufficient to compensate
1916. for the awful worry they cause, and their utter disregard of ensemble, period, self-effacement; in fact, all that goes to make a success. A man blindly does what he is told and wears what he is told in good faith." *Women Actors.*

The arguments set forth in the above paragraph must not be taken too seriously. The writer himself would qualify them if challenged, for no man has more reason to be grateful for the help of women in his many artistic enterprises. But apart from the fact that women will often assist in a dramatic performance without a thought of profit or credit to themselves, women's voices are needed in the cast of a play for the same reason that the flute and piccolo are necessary in an orchestra. A boy with a sweet, musical voice will give a better rendering of Shakespeare's young heroines than can a girl, and realise the characters more accurately. But on the English stage girls are needed to act the boy lovers; for here young men fail lamentably. There never has been a good Romeo on the English stage in the sense that the French and Italian stages are famous for their male impersonators of lovers. In the Englishman the necessary quality of voice is wanting to give physical expression to words of love. In real life his love-making is comic and hopelessly unromantic because unemotional. But there are no similar drawbacks in the Englishwoman, whose voice is

capable of expressing delicate feeling, while at the same time it is flexible enough to delineate
1916. passion, and to indicate the masculine traits of emotion. It is mere ignorance, on the part of the critics, of the technicalities of the actor's art, which prejudices them from accepting women on the stage in parts which young Englishmen never succeed in making either interesting or convincing. The difficulties which arise from differences of figure and sex can to a great extent be overcome by the costumier and wigmaker. The stage-manager's choice should depend upon who can arouse most interest in the speaking of the words, and here it is that a woman's voice tells and not that of a man.

Women Actors.

On the other hand, the advent of the star-actress has undoubtedly done harm to Shakespeare's plays; although, probably, not more than the star actor has. But since the women's parts in Shakespeare's plays rarely dominated the action of the play, the actress to-day is apt to overload her part with unnecessary detail in order to give it more prominence. Thus the traditional rendering of these characters, with which our audiences are familiar, is incompatible with the author's text and was never so rendered by the playhouse boys. Moreover, the extremely amusing part of the Duke of Arragon has been removed from *The Merchant of Venice*, because ladies who act Portia refuse to appear in a scene in which they practically have to efface themselves. And Lady Macduff, a part

of vital importance to the crisis of the story, also has disappeared from the play-bill ever since her
1916. rival, Lady Macbeth, was impersonated by a star-actress. The remedy for these evils is for the public to protest against managers being their own producers, or actresses being engaged who make " conditions " with their managers which affect the author's text.

TWICE in the context we find Macduff described as the "good" Macduff and Shakespeare
1927. could hardly have added such a qualification for a second time to the name for the sake of metre. Here indeed the word " good," which is used in a limited sense, applies to one who believed that divine Providence alone controls the destiny of mankind, above all other influences. For Macduff is essentially a God-fearing man. When Duncan is murdered, it is not so much the crime that shocks him, as the thought that a sacrilegious outrage has been committed which destroys " the Lord's anointed temple." It is a catastrophe which must predict, he thinks, the crack of doom. The whole speech is an emotional condemnation of regicide. Murder is atrocious, he knows, but in this instance it is not a beggar who perishes but a king. And to Macduff the crime is the more abhorrent, because Duncan was not only a king but a saint. When,

The " Good " Macduff.

too, he hears the appalling news, which stuns him, of the massacre of his wife and children,
1927. he wonders that heaven should allow such a calamity to happen.

As an idealist, Macduff is single-minded, and a man of strong convictions, but in the practical affairs of life he fails, being too concerned about the woes of his country even to recognise the perils threatening those dear to him. None of his companions, moreover, refer to his manhood, or to any distinction won on the battlefield.

The "Good" Macduff.

He is in no sense a son of Mars. In fact, to-day Macduff would be called a pacifist, since he refused to strike at Macbeth's conscripted men. Yet when stirred to action, he advised Malcolm to hold fast the "mortal sword," and, later on, he urged the Scottish thanes to put on "industrial soldiership."

Notwithstanding these admonitions he himself avoided bloodshed until he faced Macbeth with his "unbattered" weapon, and cried—"I have no words; my voice is in my sword!"

PERHAPS no play has been written by Shake-
1918. speare which shows more artistry in its construction and characterisation than *All's Well.* Nor has the author attempted any compromise to make his task easier. It can well be imagined

A Faithful Heart.

that in discussing with his friends his proposed treatment of the story he would be told at once
1918. by them that Helena could not thus intrigue with Diana without forfeiting her position in the story as a self-respecting and modest woman. This was a problem which the novelist had not been able to solve, and the dramatist determined he would show that a solution was possible. Thus Helena was created, and remains to this day, one of the most tender and gentle of female heroines. To the novelist's legend are fitted characters with temperaments that supply motives for their action and render them credible and probable in the judgment of fellow mortals for all time to come. Yet the play has faults due to the fact that it was one of his early compositions, revised or completed ten years later.

A Faithful Heart.

Shakespeare, then, is fully conscious of the difficulty of his task. Yet nothing dismayed by the taunts of the Green Room,—as for instance that " no modest girl could possibly follow in the footsteps of Boccaccio's Giletta,"—he begins to lay the foundations for his drama in a way which he knew would give probability to the Italian story. Naturally, everything depends upon the type of girl he chose for Helena, and in this selection he showed his unerring instinct as a dramatist and an artist. For while Helena is in love with a man who is the exact counterpart of the lad Adonis, in the famous poem which had set all London talking, she herself is without allurements. And although, in the play, she

is called beautiful in the sense that all stage-heroines are expected to be pleasing, yet she was
1918. "little" and therefore insignificant in physical shapeliness. In temperament she is nervous, shy, retiring, and constant to a fault. She is, besides, a dependant without means or relations, and has the misfortune to be in love with a young nobleman, of an honourable and ancient family, with landed estates, and who she naturally believes will never marry her, so that there is no choice between dying for love or continuing her attitude of tragic resignation. But while she is agitated by a genuinely strong passion for her foster-brother, her active imagination realises that she is suited to be his wife by reason of her stability and force of character, which her unselfish devotion to him and his interests will enable her to place at his disposal without a trace of presumption. If we appreciate all that she stakes indeed upon the man of her heart, even involving the sacrifice of her own life, in attempting the cure of the king's malady, the rare modesty shown in her words to Bertram,

A Faithful Heart.

> "I dare not say, I take you; but I give
> Me, and my service, ever whilst I live
> Into your guiding power,"

is the strongest evidence of her womanliness. He spurns her and she retires at once with her wonted submission. The king compels him to marry her, but he leaves her at the church door, dismissing her to his mother's home, and feeling that she has lost him she resignedly returns there.

Here, under normal circumstances, Helena's history might have ended, leaving her a neglected
1918. wife sighing her heart out in a moated grange. But Bertram, in his stupid way, goes a step too far. He sends her a letter, by his soldier-companion, which is not only an outrage upon decency, but inhuman and cruel beyond words when addressed to a girl just married to him. And Shakespeare, as usual, caps this insult with the mother's outburst of just indignation when she turns to the soldier and says :

A Faithful Heart.

> " I will entreat you, when you see my son,
> To tell him that his sword can never win
> The honour that he loses."

And there and then she disowns him as one unworthy of being her son. After that letter we are thankful that Helena had the courage to retaliate. Not that she premeditates her design, or contrives it in malice. Fearful lest his life shall be endangered in battle, and conscious that she has banished him from home and mother, she steals away from the castle of her husband, intending to take refuge in an Italian convent, and subsequently gives out that she has died there. Nor is the incident at Florence conceived out of jealousy, but in order to guard her husband from the consequences of a sinful deed.

And if Shakespeare shows skill in choosing a type for Helena what must be said about Bertram? Here the dramatist was confronted by even greater difficulties, for his story is by no means a repetition of " The Prince and the

Beggar-maid." Bertram is no hero, and it is even questionable whether Helena does not com-
1918. promise her self-respect in wishing to marry him. Bertram has to be a sufficiently despicable character to write that letter which forms the crisis of the drama. In reality he is an accurate portrait of the common type of his class in Shakespeare's day. He comes of a good stock and that is all there is in his favour. His father had " moral parts," and his mother has character. He is quite young, well shaped and handsome. But without his social status, in nobility and blood, he would have cut a very poor figure in the world, and would have soon come to grief in it. As it is, he needs no brains, therefore he has none. Everything is done for him by others to keep the machinery of his life going. But it must not be forgotten that his father is just dead, and that he has become the head of an ancient and wealthy family where his word is law for miles round the country. Nor must it be overlooked that he and Helena have been brought up together from childhood, at least they lived in the same house. She possibly may not have had many opportunities of talking to him, but she would have seen him daily, and his physical beauty took possession of her impressionable heart, never to leave it. And was he not a beautiful boy to look upon, this Adonis with his tiny fair curls all over his head, his large blue eyes and his naughty spoilt ways?

A Faithful Heart.

Bertram again has every right to resent a

marriage with a poor dependant of his household because it was forced upon him by a king, more
1918. especially when he knew that the girl herself had intrigued to this end. In Elizabeth's time it was incumbent upon the nobility to intermarry in order to protect their social rank and to keep estates from being broken up and given to aliens. Shakespeare, therefore, is careful not to offend the susceptibilities of the nobility of his time, who might see the performance. For this reason the king says to Bertram :

A Faithful Heart.

" Take her by the hand,
And tell her she is thine : to whom I promise
A counterpoise, if not to thy estate,
A balance more replete."

The king gives the girl a dowry, but he dare not confer on her social rank or landed property.

From the marriage onward Shakespeare's story is concerned with humbling Bertram so that, when he is degraded in the eyes of his social equals, he can realise how dependent he is on a woman's loving heart to protect him from himself. And the irony of his fate is complete when he finds that he had, in promising Diana marriage on the death of his wife, bartered away his own freedom far more effectually than had the king. For a forced marriage with Diana would have wrecked the happiness of both; from this catastrophe Helena had saved him. Moreover, Parolles, his chief companion, has disgraced himself in the Italian army, not only as a coward but as a traitor, and in his betraying military secrets

Bertram hears more truth about himself than he had ever heard before. But the nobility of a fine
1918. nature is innate in Bertram. He falls foul of Helena, in the first instance, because the emotion of love for a woman is then foreign to him; at that time he despises women and prefers the battlefield. Yet at the news of her death we are told "he changed almost into another man." There is another masterly touch of Shakespeare's in the play. When Bertram at last stands before Helena a discredited and humbled suitor, with his man Parolles by his side in rags, he has a patch over a big scar that disfigures one side of his face. He is now not even the Adonis with which her youthful heart had been so much impressed. And that scar she will not hesitate to believe came about through his flight from an enforced marriage, making him more than ever dependent upon her devotion and forbearance.

It is often said of Shakespeare that his heroines are idealised creations and that they have no
1920. counterpart in real life. But those who maintain this argument forget that it is easy for human beings to counterfeit the ideal, and that it is not an uncommon occurrence. In its relation to the art of "keeping up appearances," the world is truly a stage and the men and women in it merely players. Hence the line of demarcation between

Joan Alleyn.

the real and the imaginary, between truth and fiction, is too slight to admit of any dogmatic
1920. definition. Possibly it is well for us that this is the case, for the mere fact of pretending to be better than we are presupposes some knowledge of what that better means.

Joan Alleyn.

Besides, it is undoubtedly true that the more closely the conditions of Shakespeare's day are studied, the more obvious it is that his characters are types of men and women who lived in his own time and in his own country. And that, while his earliest plays show no near acquaintance with men and women outside the poet's own station in life, his later dramas contain characters which suggest a new experience in his career. In fact it is only necessary to compare Shakespeare's comedy *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* with that of *The Merchant of Venice* to realise that prior to the composition of the latter play the dramatist has become acquainted with court life, and has noted the behaviour of those who frequent it. There is in the Venetian play an attention to detail in the manner of conversation and in the form of courtesy that passes between a peer and a merchant, a master and a servant, which reveals Shakespeare's careful observation of class distinctions in the metropolis; while at the same time the dramatist realises that there must be shown no trace of servility on the part of the town folk towards their superiors, a demeanour which would be incompatible with the sturdy independence of character that belongs to an islander.

Especially in his women does Shakespeare seem to be depending upon personal knowledge, and
1920. in the character of Portia our poet reproduces some great English lady with whom he has come in contact, and whom he has seen living in her town mansion, ruling her large household, and receiving homage from foreign and courtly visitors.

Joan Alleyn.

At the same time it was not necessary for Shakespeare to go only into the houses of the great to discover those endearing qualities with which he has endowed his heroines. An ideal wife could be found within easy reach of his playhouse. In the Library of Dulwich College some very interesting letters exist which passed between Alleyn, the actor-manager, and his wife, which reveal to us the lovely disposition of an exemplary woman. Joan Alleyn was the stepdaughter of Henslowe, the famous money-lender and theatrical manager, and her mother, before her second marriage, was the widow of a forester who had accumulated money by cutting down and selling timber. Neither mother nor daughter could in any way claim to be educated. In fact Joan could not even write her own name and had to employ a scrivener to write her letters for her. When Alleyn was driven away from London by the plague, and was touring the provinces, he left his wife behind him to take charge of his house and his business affairs, and, indeed, she was left to face alone all the horrors of sickness and death which were surrounding her. Joan, though, has no word of complaint for these re-

sponsibilities so heavily placed upon her. She is too devoted to her husband, and he is altogether
1920. too much of a hero in her eyes, for it to be possible for her to question the propriety of his proceedings. But she weeps not a little when letters come from the other actors to their wives and none from him, "fearing," so she writes, "that you had conceived some unkindness of me because you were ever wont to write with the first." In another letter she sends word how his garden and all his belongings prosper, and that she has sown the spinach according to his directions; she has also sent his orange stockings to be dyed a very good black "against you come home to wear in winter"; she has besides paid his rent and is charged a groat by the bailiff for the receipt, and, she adds, "you know best whether you were wont to pay it; if not they made a simple woman of me." By-and-by, when the ravages of the plague have subsided, there is talk of the husband coming home, but he is careful to enquire first whether it can be done with safety to his health!

Joan Alleyn.

She answers:

> "My entire and well beloved Sweetheart, still it joys me, and long I pray God may I joy to hear of your health and welfare, as you of ours. For your coming home I am not to advise you, neither will I; use your own discretion, yet I long and am very desirous to see you; and my poor and simple opinion is, if it shall please you, you may safely come home.

I am glad to hear you take delight in hawking, and though you have worn your apparel to
1920. rags, the best is you know where to have better, and as welcome to me shall you be with your rags as if you were in cloth of Gold or Velvet. Try and see. I end praying Almighty God to bless you for his mercy's sake, and so sweetheart once more farewell, till we meet, which I hope shall not be long. Your Assured own Self till Death."

Joan Alleyn.

Then follow her mark and initials.

These letters of Joan Alleyn suggest the same beautiful and gracious giving up of a wife's life to the will of her husband that finds expression in the words of Portia spoken to her "lord and master," Bassanio. And our curiosity is instinctively aroused to question if Joan had ever heard the boy-player, Portia, speak his lord's praises on the boards of the Globe playhouse, or whether Shakespeare had not received some inspiration for his ideal creation from his knowledge of Joan's devotion to her husband? What happiness was in store for Portia we shall never know, nor whether Bassanio deserved all the affection promised him by his wife. Unfortunately, the sequel of Joan's married life is not altogether as romantic as one could wish. For within five months of her death Alleyn, now a man of considerable means and property, was again married, and this time to the daughter of a Dean,—the Dean of St. Paul's,—a girl forty years younger than himself!

Victor Hugo declared that for the presentation of tragedy nothing is wanted but "two trestles, two boards, two actors and a passion." Yet those who were present at a representation of *Romeo and Juliet* at Stratford-on-Avon recently, never came under the spell of either passion or tragedy. Not only was the continual drawing of curtains at altogether impossible moments, a disturbance, but the spectators utterly failed to believe that the lovers were really in love with each other. Indeed, the protagonists were scarcely conscious of their own frigid deficiencies. Both players seemed to be under the notion that they were on some competitive trial for determining which of the two was the audience's favourite. This kind of acting is due to the idea that personality is the one essential requisite in the art of impersonation. But actors must either naturally possess the temperament and manner which indicate those of the lover, or they must be able to assume them. "Warm, youthful blood" is the inheritance of the young of all nationalities, but among the English the physical indications of its existence are rarely noticeable.

1919. *The Two Juliets.*

As a curious coincidence, the present writer found himself, on his return to town, in the same railway compartment with a girl who was not English, and certainly had the temperament of a Juliet. She was travelling with her father and mother and two younger sisters. In appearance she was a miniature copy of the famous Venus of Milo. She had the same supple grace. Love

was to her as the very breath of her being. Old and young, rich and poor, would be impressed by
1919. her youth, her beauty, and her soft confidings. It is said the most lovable heart is the one which loves the most readily, and which instinctively gives its affections where they are not sought. So that when the gentle Romeo comes into this Juliet's life his image will completely fill the niche shaped by her dreams for one like him—for that lover's image and no other. On the instant she will surrender herself to him; she will become *his* Juliet, and love and be loved for the pure joy of loving. And there were in this counterfeit of a Juliet glimpses of gloom, latent in the inmost depth of her eyes, as we see when peering into a clear bottomless pool—a gloom revealing the soul's steadfastness, an untold excellence, for which the mocking gods exact from its possessors a penalty often paid in terms of precious sorrow, or by even costlier anguish—one which finds relief only in the loving and last sigh, " O happy dagger, this is thy sheath, there rust and let me die ! " Here, then, was a possible Juliet. Why did not the producer find one like her?

The Two Juliets.

Of course if we are to trust to the magic of our various backgrounds in order to get a play talked about, the play itself may fare rather badly. And when there is provided the opportunity of hearing the whole of the text spoken, or nearly the whole, the neglect of a careful study of a play becomes the more apparent. Of

the scenery it is only possible to say that it was quite unnecessary and inappropriate, and was
1919. responsible to a great extent for the tragedy failing to be impressive. The scenery did not fit and it never can be made to fit a play that was not written for scenery. The primal mistake in introducing it was that its addition involved pauses for changes of scene where no pause in the action takes place. Shakespeare wrote his plays in episodes, not in scenes, and they were acted without a break even if the characters were supposed to have changed their locality. The stage must never be empty or the dialogue cease to be spoken during a performance. This is shown by the following lines in the play named *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus* (1598), where the clown says, " When they have nobody to leave on the stage they bring me up, and which is worse, tell me not what I should say ! " The clown sometimes improvised dialogue, or danced a jig, to fill up a break in the action of the play, but there was rarely more than one of these breaks in the course of the afternoon's performance. And while a modern dramatist adapts his dialogue to suit the scene where the characters are supposed to be speaking, Shakespeare invariably ignores his background. Again, the producer's scenery and Shakespeare's text conflicted with each other. Paris says " Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet," when he is already in the tomb ! Juliet offers to throw herself "from off the battlements of *yonder* tower," when

The Two Juliets.

she is in Friar Lawrence's cell, where there is no window from which she can see the tower. A
1919. man-servant enters to make an announcement in Juliet's bed-chamber in the first act, a place no man-servant would have been allowed to enter. In fact the dialogue does not take place in a bedroom, and so on. These inconsistencies take away from the reality of the performance. What is known as the " Potion " episode was represented at the Memorial Theatre in seven scenes, so that the curtains were drawn six times to the utter undoing of the poet's intentions. On the Elizabethan stage the action was continuous. Well may Cibber have contended that fine scenery proved the death of fine acting, for when all was left to the spirit and judgment of the actor's art Shakespeare's plays proved to be more intelligible than they afterwards ever became with the help of the paint pot.

The Two Juliets.

It cannot too strongly be urged that unless the producer is able to think and visualise with the dramatist throughout every line of the play the result, so far as the dramatist is concerned, will be unsatisfactory. For instance, the speaker of the Prologue and the Chorus in *Romeo and Juliet* should not have resembled a pantaloon in a pantomime. He is supposed to represent the author, and should have appeared in black, with an academic gown, a plain white collar, bands, and a laurel wreath on his head. Then the three groups in the play were not clearly defined. Besides the partisans of the two Houses, there

is the neutral group, consisting of the Prince, Paris, Mercutio, the two friars, the apothecary, 1919. and the citizens who shout "Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues," and clamour for the suppression of both Houses. By priority of rank, Escalus is the pivot of the play and central figure, and should always appear with a royal escort; Paris comes next in rank; he should be very richly dressed, and being related to Escalus should appear with at least six of the Prince's liveried servants in his train. Mercutio is also related to the Royal House and should be finely apparelled, with three of the Royal attendants following him. In this way significance is given to the story. The serious consequences arising out of Mercutio's death are Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment, incidents causing the tragic death of the lovers. Thus the crisis occurs in what we may call the producer's eleventh scene, and here he should have made his half-way pause, because his twelfth scene begins the episode connected with Romeo's flight. But what are we to think of Paris appearing on the stage of the Memorial Theatre costumed as one of the crowd, without even wearing his order of nobility or having a single retainer at his heels? And of Mercutio represented in the costume of a swashbuckler, and shown in his last scene as tipsy and even drinking out of a leather bottle? It is true that he has just dined and may be heated with wine, and probably was not under self-control judging by his talk and behaviour in

The Two Juliets.

this scene, but—! Then again, the death of Tybalt plunges the House of Capulet into mourn-
1919. ing, servants and all, yet they all continue to appear in their gay clothes as if nothing had happened. Juliet, however, if she were in black for the man whose death has banished her husband, should be a supremely pathetic figure, while Capulet's rage at his daughter's refusal to wed Paris is intelligible when we realise that this marriage would mean not only a wealthy alliance, but would make Capulet a kinsman of royalty. By the way, Juliet goes out into the street and into the Friar's cell in her nightgown, only partly covered by a cloak! What would Friar Laurence say to this? No! Acted in this way, no wonder the play loses all reality.

It is difficult to visualise Shakespeare's *King Lear* from the version now being acted at the Old
1918. Vic. It violates the text, in period, in movement, and in tragic emotion. A Lear who is without his armed knights and is lacking in dignity, who is not titanic in his rage, in his hot blinding tears, nor the incarnation of insulted majesty and desolate grief; a Lear who does not rush out into the storm which is a less terror to him than is the presence of his own flesh and blood—"This is not Lear," as he himself would say.

Staging Lear.

Will the time never come when the greatest achievement in dramatic literature is to have
1918. justice done to it on the English stage? When will a company of English actors be artistic enough to sit round a table and disinterestedly read a play over together and ask themselves what it means before putting it into rehearsal? Of course, Lear's curse can be made theatrically effective by dropping the curtain immediately after it is spoken. But this necessitates omitting the dialogue of Goneril, which reveals to the audience how premeditated was the daughter's intention to wound her father's pride. It is this dialogue which makes Lear's position so tragic. The same mistake is repeated later on. Instead of Lear going out into the storm, as the author directs, which allows of the very dramatic dialogue between Goneril and Regan, the curtain descends on an ineffective stage-picture of Lear fondling the Fool. This defeats the whole tragic purpose of the scene, which is summed up in the pitiless lines spoken after Lear's exit, those concluding with Cornwall's peremptory orders : " Shut up your doors, my lord ; 'tis a wild night : My Regan counsels well : come out o' the storm."

Staging Lear.

SHAKESPEARE'S play, *King Lear,* is " domestic " tragedy, that is to say it should not be regarded
1919. as an " historical " tragedy, or as " grand " tragedy in the sense of the word identified with the expression " grand opera." Except for the

opening scene and the battle at the close there are no pageant episodes in the drama. After the
1919. first scene Lear should appear in hunting-costume, big leather boots, leather jerkin, leather cap. The only thing to differentiate him from other men at Court would be his royal Order visible over his jerkin, attached to a gold chain or coloured ribbon, and a king's feather and jewel in his cap. He would also have leather gloves and a riding whip in his hands. Unless it is remembered that Lear in appearance is a big burly fellow, interest in the dramatic action of the play will be considerably weakened. He should be able to show that he has as much physical strength as the youngest and strongest man on the stage. His face is purple from long exposure to the air in the hunting field, and his close-cropped hair quite white, this being the only indication of his great age. On no account should his figure stoop until he is broken down with grief. His manners are brusque, impulsive, and domineering. When moved his outburst of passion is titanic and uncontrollable causing him to form decisions opposed to his own interest and even to his own safety. But underneath an exterior and behaviour which are unsympathetic, if not actually repulsive, exist a large generous heart and an open hand from which even the least deserving of his court have benefited.

Staging Lear.

The crux of the play lies in the stage-management of the first scene, and unless the incidents here are handled deftly, so as to appear intelligible

and convincing, the whole tragedy may seem wanting in motive and consistency. Even here
1919. there may be no stage crowd visible, for the affairs of state to be discussed are matters which could only be decided in the Privy Council Chamber. All who are interested, with the exception of Cordelia, are standing by their chairs waiting the king's arrival. He bursts into the room and in peremptory tones gives orders to Gloucester. This is the first line of blank verse spoken in the play, and the abrupt change from prose to verse not only serves to accentuate the entrance of the central figure in the play, but gives point to the tone of command with which the words are evidently spoken as the utterance of one who is accustomed to be obeyed and expects obedience from all who live in his palace. Thus, as it were by a flash of lightning, is disclosed the entrance of the king upon the scene of his coming tragedy. He stands in the centre of the stage holding the hand of his youngest and loved child whom he has brought into the room with him, nor does he loosen his hold of her until mad with disappointed rage he flings her into the arms of "France." The audience should realise that there has been no marked affection shown by Goneril and Regan for their father, due partly to their selfish dispositions, but more especially to jealousy of Cordelia for being the favourite daughter. In these circumstances it was only natural that Lear should intend to give Cordelia a larger share of his estate since he himself and his retinue would

Staging Lear.

reside in her dominion. But it was not likely that the two elder sisters and their husbands
1919. would accept without demur a smaller portion than was their due. And to justify the unequal division Lear wishes to uphold in the eyes of his counsellors the close bond of affection which exists between himself and Cordelia. Thus it is the clash of the conflicting temperaments and wills of those gathered at the Council table which occasions the awful tragedy about to follow. We see Lear in an ungovernable temper when thwarted in his wishes; Cordelia in her adherence to what she thinks is true and just; Goneril and Regan in their cold calculating hypocrisy. Perhaps Cordelia was too exacting, since she must have known how little her father could brook contradiction. His violent outburst of temper overmasters his judgment. He rushes at Kent as if he would strike him to the ground for having dared to support Cordelia's attitude, and while in this white heat of temper he gives away the whole of his possessions into the hands of those who he knows do not love him, and will not be lenient towards his many failings. Of course Lear, when he found Cordelia unwilling to echo her sister's flattery, should have retained the kingdom in his own hands and given it to no one, as the Fool later on reminded him. Goneril and Regan should give the set speeches they have been called upon by the king to make, with mock irony in falsetto tones and with theatrical gestures. The audience should realise that they are the utterances

Staging Lear.

of heartless and designing creatures who have easily outwitted both father and sister. Cordelia
1919. should speak in tones choking with emotion, not in the least defiant; she is pained at the thought that she has distressed her father.

Staging Lear.

The Fool is a foil to the king, physically as well as mentally; very young and frail, he might even be lame or a dwarf, but the face should be beautiful and infinitely sad to look upon. He is very keen witted, while the king is obtuse, a creature of habit, yet one who can reason. Every word the Fool utters should be lightly and quietly spoken, and yet finely inflected with decision and precision. His songs are not sung but intoned in a light musical cadence, as if improvised at the moment and the words should stand out just as forcibly as they would if spoken. He moans them as if to himself, and when the king challenges their purport the lad makes a quick witty reply with a good-natured but sad laugh. He is never in manner bitter or sardonic. The king has a deep affection for him, which is shown every moment they are on the stage together. It is a beautiful trait in his character, that and his affection for Cordelia. And the audience can love Lear because he is able to love others. There is no other play of Shakespeare's which contains three tragic figures drawn with such masterly skill and deep pathos.

*My Talk to you for twenty minutes this morning is about the man Shakespeare in his work-
1916. shop who busied himself with theatrical affairs as his sole means of livelihood, being actor, part manager, and dramatist. Let us then first consider what Shakespeare was not. *U.S.A.*

He was not a knight of the theatre! In Elizabeth's time, such an honour would have appeared ridiculously out of place. The highest distinction a playwright could then expect to receive was the designation of Poet-Laureate, a reward which the Court never conferred on Shakespeare, because he was solely a playwright and did not write complimentary verses about this nobleman or that noble lady. Then Shakespeare received no University honours, because he had received no College education, and had no liking for pedants who despised poetry as a fruitless amusement, "which profits the professor naught." And, moreover, if Shakespeare were alive to-day he would deny that Bacon wrote his plays because Bacon could not write dialogue, could not make men and women talk their own thoughts in their own phraseology, and no one can be a practical dramatist who cannot do this. Shakespeare, too, would deny that he was "the world's greatest poet." A dramatic poet has no claim to that position. Herrick is regarded as a writer of finer lyrics than Shakespeare. Milton

* Delivered before the Faculty and Students of the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, U.S.A., on Commemoration Day.

wrote with more solemn and religious fervour. Moreover, the patriotism which the dramatist's
1916. heroes upheld is no longer tenable. Our responsibilities now lie outside the British Islands as much as within them, while the map of Europe and our relations with America have largely changed since *U.S.A.* the days of Elizabeth.

Nor would Shakespeare admit that he was the greatest Englishman; he would be shocked and pained at such a statement. He, a carver of puppets—no matter how closely these imitate humanity—to be reckoned a factor in the history of the destiny of his country as if he were some maker of new laws, a leader of men, a revolutionist, a saviour! No, Shakespeare was not the greatest Englishman, though he brought credit to his country as the greatest dramatic artist. Nor could he have failed to realise that the far-reaching sagacity of Queen Elizabeth gave to Englishmen the incalculable blessings of peace and prosperity; but even if he respected Elizabeth as a ruler, he could have had little affection for her as a woman, she who regarded her nobles and devoted servants merely as pawns on the diplomatic chess-board.

Then again, Shakespeare would deny that he had any very extraordinary ability for observing Nature. He did not invent Nature, he only saw what many other men and women must have noticed. When he describes how in a sylvan glade the sun shines through the leaves and makes patterns of the shadows on the grass, he

is but telling the groundlings what they often had observed for themselves, and they were pleased
1916. at being reminded of what they saw, and pleased with Shakespeare for reminding them, thus adding to the interest of the play. Nor would Shakespeare take any particular credit to himself for *U.S.A.* having created ideal types of womanhood, since he drew equally well the portraits of bad women. The same power of observation, the same care, the same attention to detail, are necessary in both types. In fact, Shakespeare would admit that it gave him much more trouble to create Goneril than Cordelia. To be wicked, and to justify your wickedness, needs more brains than simply to be good. There is no drama indeed that has not the devil in it to make the mischief which pushes the action along. It is the skill with which Shakespeare draws his devils and not his angels that gives him his first claim to the reputation of a great dramatist. Nor did Shakespeare forget that the "stinkards," as the groundlings were called, found the dramatist's devils more amusing than his angels. Then there is the pale young curate to be answered, who is distressed to think that Shakespeare should advocate suicide, as is done in the play of *Hamlet*. "*I* advocate suicide?" promptly replies Shakespeare. "Why, those are Hamlet's words, not mine. If I remember rightly another of my characters who feigned madness to save his life, Edgar, in *King Lear,* expresses just the opposite opinion. And, for goodness sake, don't ask me which is *my* opinion. I have

trouble enough sometimes to find opinions for all my characters, let alone thinking about any for
1916. myself." Then there is the academic young lady who insists on knowing why Shakespeare wrote his great tragedies? "A matter not of design, but of accident," the dramatist answers, "and *U.S.A.* due to the Queen's dislike of the historical plays which handled too freely the doings of those in high places, and also to the success of the children at the Blackfriars' Playhouse." But it was Burbage, with his wonderful acting in the title rôles, who scored most credit out of the tragedies, and Shakespeare's share of the work was overshadowed by the brilliant achievement of the actor. "Weren't you very miserable when you wrote those tragedies, Mr. Shakespeare?" "Miserable?" replies Shakespeare, "Good gracious, No! Never happier. I was then making ten thousand dollars a year. I was able to buy more land. It was the hey-day of my life. But I don't mind telling you that when I was a younger man, and I was writing my comedies I had a love adventure which gave me exquisite pain for a time. And, although I determined to have done with it and to master the trouble before it mastered me, yet there has always been a bit of soreness here in my heart about it. And one thing it taught me, which was this,—that it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. Well, some of that experience has got into my tragedies, but mind you, long after that adventure had been any serious trouble to

me. Miserable? No! A man can't do his work properly while he's miserable, and I'll
1916. willingly confess I put some of my best efforts into those tragedies. You know we didn't let the Blackfriars' boys have it all their own way, and of course those little imps couldn't act *U.S.A.* tragedy. They had no experience of life to draw upon, to enable them to express its passions."

Now what is the evidence existing to justify the opinion that Shakespeare appeared to his contemporaries as nothing specially out of the common? When he is 34 years of age we find his name mentioned among several other writers, as being equally excellent in the writing of comedy or tragedy, but he is not singled out from the others as pre-eminent in his art. Webster, a dramatist of no mean power and ability, who wrote more than one great tragedy, alludes to the " copious industry of Mr. William Shakespeare." Then there is a contemporary reference about him which I cannot at the moment trace, stating " His genius was jocular, but when disposed he could be very serious." Another tradition reports that Shakespeare " was the more to be admired since he was not a company keeper." He lived in Shoreditch, and if invited to a carousal, pleaded indisposition. Two of the Globe actors, men of worth and standing, who had known Shakespeare during the whole of his professional life, and after his death had collected his plays for publication, asserted that the reputation of these plays was

made in the theatre long before the dramas were published, and that on the stage " they had
1916. stood out all appeals "—meaning all censures. If there was anything personally remarkable in this genius we get no hint of it from any contemporaries. When Shakespeare walked down *U.S.A.* Cheapside if passers-by had turned their heads to look at him because he had the face of a god, and the voice of an angel, surely some woman, if not a man, would have recorded the fact in her diary or in one of her letters. Turner, whose genius and industry, to my mind, were among painters what Shakespeare's were among dramatists, had nothing distinctive about his appearance. One of your scholars, whose labours have won for him a world-wide fame (I refer to the late Dr. Horace Furness), once told me that he would not have cared to know Shakespeare, because he in himself must have been more or less a characterless person, by which Dr. Furness meant that great mental creative activity was not necessarily allied to a strong personality. Had there been anything unusually striking in Shakespeare's conversational powers there were plenty of Boswells alive in those days who would have been eager to record the dramatist's talk for the benefit of posterity. It is quite reasonable to presume that after the exhausting labour of dramatic composition, carried on at high pressure and under the stimulation of a very lively imagination, talk of all kinds would be distasteful to Shakespeare.

He may have wished to recuperate his energies by quietly pruning his rose trees.

1916. Personally, I refuse to discuss Shakespeare, except as the skilled artist, the expert in writing plays, who is the greatest artist in the domain of drama the world has ever seen. He is an expert, *U.S.A.* in contradistinction to a mere money-making craftsman, who is an amateur. He is a skilled artist because he has a natural aptitude for his work so strong that no persuasions can force him away from his special bent, and because he puts his own individual intelligence and enthusiasm into the work he fashions. He is a great artist, because he is for ever striving to make the play he is at work upon better than the last one; because he refuses at anyone's bidding to turn out, I won't say a bad, but even an indifferent piece of work, whatever the public want, or think they want.

What then is Shakespeare's message to you graduates, if he has one at all? It is this, " You cannot show any respect for me unless you show respect for the work I have done. To say that you admire my plays and then to put them on the book-shelf and content yourselves with writing commentaries upon them may satisfy the ambitions of the critics, but it is no compliment to me. If you care for my plays please show it by talking and writing a little less about them, and having them acted a little oftener."

Among the more important English contributions to the Biography of Shakespeare are
1917. Halliwell-Phillipps' valuable two volumes of illustrations and accompanying outlines, issued in 1884 and completed in 1886. Here, for the first time, the general reader had access to copies of legal and other documents, which are the only authoritative guides on which to base conclusions about Shakespeare's private and public life as a player and a writer for the theatre. And this valuable work was continued by Mr. Fleay in his "Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare"; by Mr. Thomas Fairman Ordish, and Mrs. C. C. Stopes, and by Sir Adolphus Ward, who in his "History of English Dramatic Literature" quotes Stevens' well-known saying, "All that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakespeare is that he was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, married and had children there; went to London, where he commenced acting, made his will, died and was buried," adding that, brief as this statement is, it might be shown to err here and there on the side of over-precision; while Dr. C. W. Wallace has discovered fresh documents which add important links in the broken chain of evidence. Sir Sidney Lee has shown considerable industry in collecting under one cover the Shakespearian labours of many minds, but in his efforts to supplement the scanty details he has not been

*"Our Will."**

* *Mellifluous Shakespeare, whose enchanting quill*
Commanded mirth or passion, was but Will.
—Thomas Heywood.

altogether happy, and in his readiness to draw conclusions, when they were not always war-
1917. ranted by the facts, he has met with some criticism.

As regards the recorded traditions personal to Shakespeare, and more especially referring to his early days at Stratford, nothing was put on to paper for over one hundred years from the time of his birth; and from that of his death seventy or eighty years had elapsed before anyone thought of ascertaining what could be learnt respecting his personal history. What makes the traditions recorded in 1690 valueless is not that they refer to an earlier period but the impossibility of now judging the quarter from whence they came and the motives which inspired their utterance. When it is remembered that religious party feeling ran very high in Stratford; that the town-folk were mostly on the Puritan side; that the mother of Shakespeare, in the opinion of Sir Sidney Lee, was a Catholic, though the proof of it is slight; and that the father was responsible for first bringing the hated players into the town, very little credit need be given to contemporary gossip if the tone is prejudicial and cannot be traced to its source. The biographical value of the verbal accounts depends upon who were the speakers, and here the evidence is not reassuring. Let us do away, then, with these traditions, since it is obvious that a friend of the family could with justice speak of Shakespeare's father as a yeoman, a burgess, a

"Our Will."

landowner, or a householder, while one who was less favourably disposed might with equal right
1917. call the man a "butcher," for many farmers then killed their own cattle. So long as our biographers are contented to use the "perhaps" and the "probable," the stimulation needed to encourage further research is absent, and a willingness to rest satisfied with what is uncertain prevails.

"Our Will."

A biographer must set down all that is known of his subject without favour or prejudice. Nothing is heard about the boy until his marriage, but it is likely enough that the young Adonis excited the admiration of the Warwickshire girls and fell a victim to the intrigues of a rustic Venus. After the birth of his three children Stratford supplies no further record of him until he reappears on the scene at the age of thirty-two, the owner of the best house in the town. From this lack of information as to the doings of the poet for the first half of his life it is only reasonable to infer that to his fellow-townsmen his career was uneventful. To Shakespeare himself life's first outlook was a tragic one. Its burdens and cares fell early and heavily on his young shoulders. If he possessed a spark of natural feeling, or self-respect, he could not have stood idly by when his father was taken to the town jail as a common debtor, or have ignored his own responsibilities which involved providing means for wife and children. Money had to be made or found somewhere at

once, and it was made by the young " Will " in the only place where it could be quickly earned—
1917. that is to say among the players who tramped the country and supplied the chief amusement of the gay Londoners. And the boy's tragedy did not end here, because to those who had " sat at good men's feasts " and who had " been where bells have knolled to church " the stage was the most degraded calling to follow. Wealth could be gained by acting and writing plays, but no good reputation earned by doing so. Something more was necessary, and Shakespeare won the laurels of a poet where Spenser did, among the courtiers and the scholars. The miracle of his life was the industry with which he exploited his natural gifts, which were never wasted, thrown away, or abused.

" Our Will."

His life was one long toil and ended at middle age. No sooner had he re-established the credit of his family at Stratford by his own hard-earned means, than he had to set to work to save the fortunes of Burbage's Company of Players who were in danger of losing their livelihood by the success of children's performances at Blackfriars, and by the disfavour of Elizabeth and her Court due to the Essex Rebellion. Here Shakespeare's genius and industry again triumphed, when he gave to the world what proved to be his greatest achievement—the famous tragedies. But his personal life and doings are no more recorded in London than they were at Stratford. Busy men are not talked about, because they are rarely

seen, they are always in their workshop. On the other hand, the work he did all London knew and
1917. discussed. He stood pre-eminent among his fellow-dramatists and poets, not so much for his attainments, as for what appeared to them to be the absence of artifice about his work. They said *"Our Will."* that "nature was all the art which was used upon him"; that he was "a natural wit without any art at all." On his Stratford monument are written the words:—"Shakespeare, with whom quick Nature died." No sooner had he published his first poem, "Venus and Adonis," than he was hailed as "Sweet Shakespeare," not because he was "sweet" in his person or character, but because the music of his verse was "sweet" and "honey-tongued." In his plays, as Stevens pointed out, "to make his meaning intelligible to his audience seems to have been his only care, and with the ease of conversation he has adopted its incorrectness." To his contemporaries this seemed to be no art at all, but we now know that it was art concealing art, which is the highest form of art.

*The mystery which surrounds the private life
1925. of Shakespeare will never be wholly cleared up. *The Stratford Shakespeare.* A poet's inspirations do not necessarily reflect the prosaic routine of his own normal existence;

* Reprinted from the "New Statesman" by kind permission of the Editor.

thus his personality cannot be discovered by merely reading his plays. Moreover, the newly
1925. published records at Stratford-upon-Avon throw little fresh light on Shakespeare's life or on that of his wife. About some other members of his family there exists more information.

The Stratford Shake-speare.

The strangely elusive personality of Anne seems to hide itself behind a cloud of rumour which can easily lure the chronicler into surmises that cannot be supported by any reliable evidence. Even if Shakespeare wished for a marriage with Anne, his parents certainly would have been against the union at so inopportune a moment for them as the eve of their bankruptcy. And the inequalities, both in regard to Anne's age and to her social position, would have roused opposition. Nor at eighteen years of age could Shakespeare himself have been keen on marriage, just when the world and its wonders lay open before him, as yet unexplored. To the allurements of a rustic Venus he would reply, " Measure my strangeness with my unripe years," or, with even more truth, protest, " Before I know myself seek not to know me." We know, too, that Shakespeare was a good-looking youth, and, what was more to the purpose, that to the townsmen he was heir to his parents' estates (which, alas ! had already been pawned and were never to be redeemed), while Anne, herself, was penniless except for her father's gift of six pounds. Thus the door lies open to suspicions; they cannot, however, be confirmed.

But whatever difficulties were behind this early entanglement, we know, for certain, that Anne
1925. throughout her whole life remained Shakespeare's acknowledged wife, and that he supported her and her children and gave them the best of what he had to give. We must remember also that, except during the last few years of her husband's life, she had the burden of being sole parent to his children. To them he must have appeared little more than a myth; hours, days and months would pass without a sound of the father's footsteps at the door. We know, besides, that Susanna was devoted to her mother, and that she arranged, probably not without opposition, to have her laid next her father in the chancel—an honoured and coveted position—also that she provided one of the most touching inscriptions perhaps ever composed by a daughter for a mother's tomb. Again, she was insistent that her mother's relations should not be slighted nor ignored. It is difficult otherwise to explain the preference the Halls and Nashs had for the Hathaway connections compared to those on the dramatist's side. For Susanna and her daughter reconveyed Shakespeare's property at least four times, and on these new documents appear the names of Hathaways as witnesses, they being also beneficiaries. In Shakespeare's will no mention is made of his wife's relations.

The Stratford Shakespeare.

The coming of Dr. John Hall, physician, to Stratford-upon-Avon, not only must have created a flutter in the household of New Place, but it

had far-reaching consequences regarding the future history of Shakespeare's family. Susanna
1925. was twenty-four years old in 1607 when she married Hall. As a prospective heiress she might have wedded, in her teens, some member of a neighbouring county family. But her father's position as an owner of landed property was not fully declared until first, in 1605, and again in 1610, he added considerably to his estates; nor did his employment at Court as one of His Majesty's Players facilitate the arrangement of a marriage for his daughter in the particular social quarter he desired. In the midst of these anxieties there arrived in the town, from no one knows where, the much needed residential doctor, aged 32, who possessed the necessary recommendations in so far that he was a scholar, a gentleman, and one skilled in the practice of a useful and honourable profession. We may be sure that both Shakespeare and his daughter Susanna received such a new-comer with hopeful curiosity. From this date onwards Hall apparently became chief counsellor in the New Place establishment. In future if any family arguments arose Shakespeare could put an end to an unpleasant discussion with the authenticated remark that " He and Mr. Hall " thought this or thought that, and perhaps Hall did most of the thinking, at least as regards the marriage settlements. But in the affection Susanna had for her husband, and the joy she experienced in her conversion through him to a faith in the things which last—in these

The Stratford Shakespeare.

matters Hall's record is all to his credit. He was, besides, particularly successful as a physi-
1925. cian and never failed to do the best for his patients; he lived on good terms with his mother-in-law; he befriended her relations; he was a personal friend of the vicar, and actively promoted the interests of his Parish Church. He would doubtless have been most considerate towards his father-in-law, only, as with all Puritans then, he would have regretted that Shakespeare could find nothing better to do than to write plays. And if Susanna told her father what a low opinion Hall had of the stage we can imagine Shakespeare thinking to himself, " O father Abraham what these Christians are ! " Hall more than once came into conflict with the Town Council which he called an assembly of " knaves," for he was an outspoken man of great energy as well as of strong religious convictions.

The Stratford Shake-speare.

Shakespeare, who in his early plays made fun of apothecaries, is more tolerant towards them after his daughter's marriage with Dr. Hall. In a contribution to the play of *Pericles* (1608) the lines about Cerimon are certainly descriptive of the character of his son-in-law as he was known and spoken of in Stratford-upon-Avon :—

Your honour hath through Ephesus pour'd forth
Your charity, and hundreds call themselves
Your creatures, who by you have been restor'd;
And not your knowledge, your personal pain, but even

Your purse, still open, hath built lord Cerimon
Such strong renown as time shall never lift.

1925. Because of his long periods of absence from Stratford, Shakespeare was never called to serve upon the Town Council, but he wisely kept on good terms with the Corporation. In his prosperous days he took over a large part of its tithes by way of benefiting his fellow-townsmen. Again, he showed good temper over the dispute about enclosing the common fields. As a mark of friendly relations, the Mayor in 1616, a near neighbour, witnessed the signature of the poet's will with three other tradesmen.

The Stratford Shakespeare.

But a situation of some delicacy arose between the Town Council and Shakespeare when he bought New Place as a residence for himself and his family. His father had been the first Bailiff to license a company of players to act in Stratford, and for thirty years dramatic companies had continued annually to give their plays in the town. In 1587 as many as five companies acted there. It is significant, then, that after Shakespeare's return from London in 1597, and until his death, there were no more entries in the Stratford Records of payment for visits from players. Further, while in 1602 the fine was £5, as money is valued to-day, for a Bailiff or Alderman who might wish to license actors to give a dramatic performance in the place, in 1612 the fine had become increased to £80. It is not unlikely that this cessation of visits from the players was due to personal consideration for the dramatist and

his family. Shakespeare would hardly have wished his London theatrical affairs to be dis-
1925. cussed at Stratford-upon-Avon by men who belonged to the same profession as himself. There were, indeed, residents living in Stratford as late as 1670 who kept silence but could have given first-hand accounts of Shakespeare's life before he left home, and later on in the days of his prosperity. Such information, however, was not forthcoming. Hence arose the so-called "traditions," which were mere tavern gossip.

The Stratford Shakespeare.

Those who earned their livelihood in a playhouse, in Shakespeare's time, were despised and abused by an aggressive fanaticism which was the more bitter because the Court and the nobility gave the players their patronage and good will. The interlineation, therefore, that Shakespeare made in his will—probably not without protest from the Halls—in favour of three of his fellow-actors, was an act of extraordinary courage on his part, since here, in his final testament, was he identifying himself as one of the "common players." It was this admission which may have impelled his executors, or the vicar, to omit Shakespeare's name from the gravestone and also all reference to his calling from the monument. Still, the touching appeal made in the name of Jesus, that the dead dramatist's bones should rest undisturbed, we now know was effectual.

Visitors to the church will seek in vain for any tablet to the memory of the poet's boy, Hamnet, or of his twin sister, Judith, who was Lady Bar-

nard's aunt and Susanna's sister. This is the more to be regretted because Judith married
1925. Thomas Quyny and became the mother of three sons in succession, any one of whom, had he lived, would have inherited New Place. Except for the death of Judith's three boys, and two of them reached maturity, Lady Barnard could not have disposed of her grandfather's residence which, on becoming the property of strangers, was soon afterwards demolished.

By the residents in Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare must have been little known and not in the least understood. He maintained a studied reticence about himself and his affairs, and for very definite and proper reasons, since his personal reputation as a poet, in his native town, was clouded by his being a player as well as a playmaker.

James Burbage was not only the first Englishman to build a wooden playhouse (The Theater,
1923. 1576) and to convert part of a monastery into a stone playhouse (The Blackfriars, 1596), but he was also the creator of English dramatic art. He selected and trained his fellow-actors, including one who became the greatest dramatic poet of all time, and another, his own son, who was destined to be the foremost actor of his day. But the life of James Burbage ended before he

Elizabethan Pioneers.

reaped the benefit of his labours, for when he died he was owning two theatres and forbidden
1923. to give dramatic performances in either of them. Yet, thwarted and harassed by ceaseless litigation with landlords and others, it was owing to his initiative that the first English playhouse was built, that a Roscius trod its boards, and that a tragedy called *Hamlet* was written, which will outlive the reputation of all past or modern dramas.

Elizabethan Pioneers.

After the father's death the sons, Cuthbert and Richard, erected the Globe Playhouse (1599) upon the Bankside from material which had been used in building The Theater. This venture involved an expenditure of money " taken up at interest," which Cuthbert Burbage stated, " lay heavy on us for many years." To share in the profits of " the house," the brothers chose, as partners, " those deserving men Shakespeare, Heminge, Condell, and Phillipps." Meanwhile the Blackfriars property, which the elder Burbage had leased and converted into a winter playhouse, " with great charge and trouble," had been sublet for the use of " the Queen's Majesties Children of the Chappell." The boys gave performances in it until 1608, when the remainder of the tenancy was purchased by Cuthbert and Richard, who " placed men-players there, which were Heminge, Condell, Shakespeare."

Throughout their careers the partners never wavered in their loyalty towards each other, nor in their determination that the Burbage Company

should be pre-eminent both in talent and performance. All of them were regarded as men of
1923. " grave and sober behaviour," who " lived in reputation," while Richard Burbage and William Shakespeare admittedly had genius. All, too, were actors, excepting Cuthbert Burbage. The work began with the elder Burbage, who built the first playhouse, and at his death the others continued in partnership, if not during the whole of their lifetime, at all events until their retirement from the stage. James Burbage died in 1597, Augustine Phillipps in 1605, Shakespeare had retired to Stratford-on-Avon by 1610, Richard Burbage, of whom Ben Jonson said he was " our best actor," died in 1619, Condell in 1627, Heminge in 1630, still holding the office of treasurer; and six years later Cuthbert Burbage, the last of the founders, passed away, his death being followed two weeks later by that of his wife. This ended the Burbage Company. The property then fell into other hands, and the shares were distributed among the acting members.

Elizabethan Pioneers.

The work of a pioneer is generally a thankless task, and that of James Burbage was no exception to the rule. By trade a joiner and by choice an actor, nothing is known of him until his name appears at the head of Lord Leicester's players. Yet early in his career he was described as " a stubborn fellow," and the determination of the Corporation that no plays should be acted within the City without the Lord Mayor's licence—not-

withstanding that Burbage held the first Royal Patent to act there—decided him to have a
1923. " playinge place " of his own. In Finsbury Fields, within sight of the City, he constructed a building which he called " The Theater." Perhaps if he had foreseen the hornets' nest this daring deed would raise about his ears he would have hesitated before taking so bold a step. Time, money, strength, and brain-power were spent in combating the persecution to which he was subjected.

Elizabethan Pioneers.

During the whole of his twenty years' tenancy James Burbage stood with his back to the wall, fighting for the existence of England's first built theatre. The landlord who owned the ground and the superior landlord who claimed the ground, the defaulting brother-in-law who had promised to pay half the cost of the building and its maintenance, and the Corporation who twice threatened to pull down the playhouse, it being, as they asserted, dangerous to health and morals—even the Court where the Cecils were all-powerful while Leicester's influence was waning—all parties were in opposition. Yet such was the tenacity of the man, though harassed by unscrupulous opponents, that he fulfilled all his obligations, kept possession of his theatre, and in accordance with his contract demanded a renewal of his ground lease from his ill-tempered landlord.

And it was here that James Burbage was held up by his bitterest foe, who, under the meanest

excuses, refused to honour his own signature for a new lease. Thus, while still claiming his right
1923. to act plays in his own building, Burbage realised how insecure was his property in the Finsbury Fields. It was, moreover, a neighbourhood where an unruly crowd often assembled for outdoor sports, to the annoyance of the playgoers. On the other hand, at Blackfriars, also one of the " liberties " where the Corporation had no jurisdiction, there still remained an unused and but partially demolished priory, portions of which had been converted into residences for the nobility. To build a theatre there would bring drama nearer to a cultured audience, and Burbage's players were now by their talent acknowledged to be the best company in the kingdom. It was much to his credit that with his money locked up in the " Theater," and its future existence as a " playinge-place " threatened, Burbage could raise £600 (£4,800 in modern money) to purchase the refectory hall at Blackfriars and convert it into a playhouse, consisting of a stone building, roofed, and artificially lighted. For a whole year he personally directed the necessary alterations, living himself on the premises. A few weeks before its completion his daughter Helen died, and was buried in the adjoining churchyard. Soon after also died Lord Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain, whose " servants " Burbage's players had become since Leicester's death. His successor proved no friend to them, for Lord Cobham was of Cecil's

Elizabethan Pioneers.

faction; Essex was abroad, and Southampton out of favour with the Queen. Nor was the
1923. Corporation slow to take advantage of this lack of Court influence. For at this time (1596), Nash, the dramatist, writes, "The players are piteously persecuted by the Lord Mayor and the aldermen, and however in their old lord's (Hunsdon's) time they thought their estate settled, it is now so uncertain they cannot build upon it." Yet Burbage worked on with his old indomitable energy, and with age telling against him. At last, when he thought he had secured an abiding home for English drama, the devil of discord once more stepped in to snatch the fruits of this success out of his hands. It was a woman who led this unexpected attack, an elderly dowager, residing in Blackfriars, who would not tolerate the existence of a playhouse in the neighbourhood where wealth and fashion reigned. A petition to the Privy Council was signed, presented, and granted, and Burbage, who had built two theatres, was unable to use either. Battered and beaten by life's hardships, he yielded to the inevitable, laying down his weary head to rest.

Elizabethan Pioneers.

But James Burbage had not worked in vain. After his death his two sons, with Shakespeare, Heminge, Condell, and Phillipps, bound themselves together as shareholders to finance his property. In 1598 "The Theater" was removed to the Bankside and became "The Globe" of famous memory. There Richard

Burbage, who had begun his career as an actor in 1584, established his reputation. Of him it
1923. was said that his auditors were "never more delighted than when he spake, nor more sorry than when he held his peace." It was not, however, until 1608 that the Blackfriars playhouse was used by the Globe-men as a "playinge-place." For three years it was unoccupied, and for another eight years the aristocratic audience which James Burbage had intended should come to see Richard act, crowded instead to hear the Queen's Chapel Children. When the men-players came it was not to appear in song and masque, but in the tragedy of *King Lear,* a new play which their fellow-actor had just written.

When Elizabeth died it was remarked by more than one dramatist that the writer of *Hamlet*
1916. did not join in the praises that were bestowed upon her memory. And there was reason for Shakespeare's silence. The Queen had shown during the latter part of her reign hostility towards Essex and Southampton, who were the poet's patrons and friends, and even ill-will towards the Globe players, for she had set up in the City her own theatre as a protest against those historical plays which were not in favour at Court, being considered revolutionary, among which was Shakespeare's *Richard II.*

The Blackfriars Playhouse

1916.

These plays were popular with the people, but it is hardly likely they could have proved to the taste of the Queen, seeing that the quarrels between the Crown and the barons were not likely to inspire respect or esteem for the Court. And when Essex, for political reasons, encouraged Burbage and Shakespeare in their presentation of the historical plays, the Queen determined to set up a rival theatre for the purpose of providing the wealthy classes with some more suitable kind of entertainment. The dramatic poets who contributed the comedies and masques for this new venture were Ben Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, men who stood on good terms with the academic world. The City Corporation, however, demurred at a theatre being maintained within the City walls contrary to their regulations, but were powerless to interfere, since the Blackfriars precincts, as a disused monastery, were claimed to be under royal jurisdiction. By way of retaliation, therefore, the Corporation intentionally neglected the Privy Council's orders to suppress all but two of the public theatres, and more especially to limit the performances at the Globe to two a week, that they might compete as little as possible with the one performance a week given at the Blackfriars.

The Blackfriars Playhouse.

We may gather, indeed, how much this theatre was favoured at Court by the description given of it by a distinguished foreign visitor who passes over the plays at the Globe and Fortune with a

bare mention, contained in two lines, and one line and a half respectively. A bear and bull fight at
1916. the Bear Garden has four lines. Then we get an excellent description of the quality of entertainment provided at the Blackfriars written by an eye-witness. For Philip Julius, Duke of Setten, Prussia, in his eighteenth year (1602) was sent on a grand tour of the chief States of Europe for the purpose of completing his education, shaping his character, and preparing him for the duties of government in his own country. His tutor kept a careful diary in accordance with the Duke's command to write down day by day everything they saw or heard on the journey.

The Blackfriars Playhouse.

. . . . " 18th Sept., Saturday, 1602.—From the Art Museum we went to the play at the Children's Theatre, which in its plot deals with a chaste widow. It was the story of a royal widow of England—But with reference to this Children's Theatre this is the state of affairs. The Queen maintains a number of young boys who are required to devote themselves earnestly to the art of singing, and to learn to perform on various sorts of musical instruments, also at the same time to carry on their studies. These boys have their special preceptors in all the various arts, and in particular excellent instructors in music. Now in order that they may practise courtly manners, it is required of them to act a play every week, for which purpose, indeed, the Queen has established for them a special theatre, and has provided them with a superabundance of rich

apparel. Whoever wishes to be a spectator at one of their performances must pay as much as
1916. eight shillings of our (Pomeranian) coinage. And yet there is always present a large audience, including many respectable women, because entertaining plot developments and many excellent teachings, as we were informed by others, are expected to be presented. All these performances were acted by candlelight, which produces a fine spectacular effect. For a whole hour preceding the play one listens to a delightful musical entertainment on organs, lutes, pandorins, mandolins, violins, and flutes, as on the present occasion, indeed when a boy sang so charmingly to the accompaniment of a bass-viol that unless possibly the nuns of Milan may have excelled him, we have not heard his equal on our journey."

The Blackfriars Playhouse.

From this description we can believe that, in contrast to the public theatres where plays were presented by daylight, the enclosed privacy and spectacular elegance at Blackfriars must have been altogether as attractive as the testimony of the time has declared. With an aristocratic audience filling the house from the seats in pit and galleries to the lords' rooms, the fashionable "smart set" sitting at right and left on the stage, and the shimmer of candlelight over the royal costumes of the boy-actors in the midst of music, dramatic movement, and fantastic masque, it is little wonder, a contemporary remarked, that the spectacular effect was enough "to ravish a man" with delight, and to draw from the public

theatres the most desirable part of their audience. Now we know why, in *As You Like It* and *Much*
1916. *Ado,* apology is made by Shakespeare for the indifferent voices of the boys who sang the songs,—it was a satirical allusion to the more fascinating singing which could be heard across the water. *The Blackfriars Playhouse.* Again, we know why, when the Blackfriars boys visited Edinburgh, reference by the Presbyterians was made to the singing lads " with their Papistical vestments," and to the " buttered beer " provided for them when they were hoarse. We understand, too, the significance of a letter from a Norwich resident to a country neighbour when he says, " I pray you tell your sons that the Red Bull company of players are now in town, and have acted one play with good applause, and are well clad and act by candlelight." Queen Elizabeth had succeeded in her object in substituting the " show " for the reality, and Shakespeare might well break his magic wand in 1611, and say that his work was completed. Thus theatrical settings in this case, as in all others, had much to do in shaping the course of the drama.

THERE are not wanting signs that managers, in
1912. the near future, may be willing to hark back to *The Platform Stage.* the earlier and simpler methods of staging Shakespeare's plays. The increasing railway rates, to-

gether with the additional cost of labour and cartage involved in moving scenery from town to
1912. town, are becoming a serious tax on the managerial purse, so that any disposition shown by the public to dispense with scenery will, without doubt, find, sooner or later, ready acceptance in the theatre.

The Platform Stage.

There can be no doubt, also, that the production of *The Miracle* at Olympia aroused an interest for drama which can be acted within the auditorium, instead of outside it. The stage, bearing its mound of trees, which was daily wheeled through the gothic doorway towards the centre of the arena, afforded a practical illustration of the gain in actuality which the characters obtained when they were able to step out of the picture frame and become part of the audience. And that this actuality was a vital feature in the dramatic performances of Shakespeare's day I pointed out more than thirty years ago.

The morality play, *Everyman,* revived by myself, was first given at the Charterhouse in 1901, and afterwards at St. George's Hall, and was the earliest instance, in modern times, of a return to the practice of characters approaching the stage through the auditorium. The Elizabethan Stage Society was founded in 1895, while the memorable *Hamlet* performance (first quarto) took place in April, 1881, being the first revival of the draped stage that was attempted in this country or elsewhere. This representation excited an animated controversy between the dramatic critics

and Dr. F. J. Furnivall regarding the dramatic merits of this early quarto, while the innovation
1912. of the curtained background drew hostile comments from all the papers, although one writer ventured to remark that " the critics had no sympathy with an experiment the nature of which they did not understand "! But the full brunt of the ridicule was reserved for Dr. Furnivall's emendations of the corrupt passages in the text, more especially of the amended lines in the celebrated soliloquy, which were thus parodied in " Punch ":—

The Platform Stage.

" To be, or not to be? There you are, dontcher-know!
To die, to sleep! is that all? Forty winks?
To sleep, to dream! Ah, that's about the size of it!
For from that forty winks when we awake
In the undiscovered cotton-night country
From which no passenger ever took a return ticket—
Why—ah, yes—humphexactly—very much so!"

It should be added that an amateur actor, Bernard Partridge, now famous as one of the chief " Punch " cartoonists, took the part of Laertes in this same performance, while Ophelia was acted by Lady Tree, who was then Miss Maud Holt. She was the first Ophelia, in our time, to appear on the stage as described in the original stage-direction, with the lute in her hands instead of flowers.

But although, as an Englishman, I may claim that Shakespeare's country was the first to agi-
1912. tate for a return to the open platform, I do not overlook the fact that it was Professor Reinhardt's genius which gave practical shape on a large scale to the principles of Elizabethan staging, and that he showed himself capable of understanding and adapting these principles to modern conditions while at the same time he proved himself to be a genuine artist by his ability to subordinate the setting to the requirements of the drama. And here Professor Reinhardt's methods compare favourably with those of Mr. Gordon Craig, although I am not sure that the Professor does not owe something to Mr. Craig's inspiration in the matter of design, colour, and atmosphere.

The Platform Stage.

Now in *The Miracle* the spectator was never led to think of Reinhardt, but only of the Madonna. Religious feeling and reverent care had been bestowed in forcing the central idea of the story upon the attention. This is the triumph of good stage management. But it was in *Œdipus,* perhaps, more than in *The Miracle,* that Professor Reinhardt showed his grasp of the essentials for open platform performances.

Reinhardt succeeded in making *Œdipus* interesting to a popular audience where an English stage-manager might have failed, because he concentrated his attention on variety of sound, novelty in the movement, and change as well as richness of

costume. To take an instance. Œdipus comes in, not once or twice, but many times, from the
1912. large door at the back, and the audience might tire of the repetition if there were not on every occasion of Œdipus's re-entrance a rearrangement and alteration in the attendants who followed him and in their costumes and appointments, as well as minor alterations in those of the central figure, so that the eyes, as well as the ears, of the spectators, might be kept alert and interested.

The Platform Stage.

But what are the prospects of success for the new experiments to be made? They are more promising, I believe, than the general public is disposed to think.

Much depends upon the stage-manager, who must have courage to ignore stage traditions, and imagination to grasp the possibilities of his new freedom. He must look closer to nature than he has been accustomed to do, and must realise that the tableau is replaced by the faces, the voices, and the gestures, of the actors, who become of vital importance to the audience as interpreters of the drama. On the other hand, does it follow that from a revival of the use of the platform stage Shakespeare's plays will be more intelligently acted? This question is by no means easy to answer. In the first place, it may be doubted if there is any burning desire on the part of our English producers to uphold the author's interests in preference to their own or to those of the public. Nor has the public yet learned to separate

the poet's plays from their historical period, or from their foreign locality, and to look at them
1912. through Elizabethan spectacles. Nor is Shakespeare's dramatic art yet understood, since hitherto his plays have been forced into a setting for which they were never intended. Without, however, an intimate knowledge of the poet's constructive art it is impossible to hope that the right point of view will be caught with regard to what is, or is not, of importance to accentuate in the story.

The London stage still needs a producer who will have the courage to give up setting Shake-
1918. speare's plays as if they were written on the plan of eighteenth-century Italian Opera, or in other words, who will dare to give up the scenery, the costumes, and the properties which disfigured the Opera stage in the time of Handel, and which are hopelessly out of place in any form of entertainment except Christmas pantomime. It is to be regretted that the producer at the "Old Vic" shows no real advance in knowledge and ideas upon his predecessors. Or, if he possesses a saner vision of Shakespeare's dramatic art, then means and opportunity, apparently, are not forthcoming to enable playgoers to have the benefit of it. As a consequence audiences at the "Old Vic" are expected to believe that Shake-

In the Playhouse.

speare's characters lived in an unreal world of painted canvas, and wore costumes which human
1918. figures have never worn in any period or country. And the same insincerity of treatment, as regards accessories, is noticeable throughout. For instance, in *The Merchant of Venice,* the three precious caskets, in the shape of cigar boxes, are handled by the actors with a levity which at once tells the spectators that they are not made of metal, but only consist of painted cardboard! And the key of these paper-boxes the producer gives to the charge of Nerissa, a waiting woman, who thus controls the secret of Portia's destiny. Again, when one of these painted boxes is opened by a suitor, the possessor of the key walks out of the chamber with the rest of the attendants, leaving the casket open for anyone who enters to examine! Thus the play follows on the usual lines, even to the introduction of the masquers with their dance, which is contradictory to the text. The play, too, was heavily cut, and more so than usual owing to the slowness of the opening scenes. The audience was not even told why Portia and Nerissa appeared in the trial scene.

In the Playhouse.

The producer calls *The Merchant of Venice* "an elastic play," meaning, as he says in his notes, that the part of Shylock can be acted "in an infinite variety of ways." But all parts are similarly at the mercy of an actor's interpretation, even if they are contrary to the intentions of the dramatist, who doubtless could visualise his own characters and their actions. If Portia is a

heroine, then Shylock must of necessity take the part of a villain, because she defeats his designs
1918. on Antonio's life. Nor is it possible to regard a man as being either reputable or sympathetic who says of the protagonist, Antonio,—" For were he out of Venice " (dead !) " I could make what merchandise I will." As to the impersonator of Shylock, he was unable to present a portrait of Shakespeare's Jew through want of physical flexibility, and Portia was even less impressive. The Bassanio group, in consequence, stood out to advantage, very much to the benefit of the comedy, since for the first time for many years Bassanio held an appreciable place in the drama, which he should always do as Portia's lover. But it is a pity that the third casket scene was mutilated. An excellent impersonation of Old Gobbo was given by an amateur of repute. There can be little doubt that in the present condition of the professional stage, amateurs are sometimes the better actors of Shakespeare.

In the Playhouse.

The production of *Measure for Measure* was marred by a " white blot " which very nearly proved destructive, not only to the understanding of this fine and subtle comedy, but the " blot " accentuated certain episodes which, although beautiful in themselves, were yet rendered unnecessarily unpleasant through the producer's neglect to study the play carefully. For Isabella is not yet a nun; she never becomes one. Nor is

she even a novice, for, as Miss Emily Hickey very rightly points out, the Roman
1918. Catholic church does not allow novices to have intercourse with anyone outside the convent. On the day her brother Claudio is arrested Isabella is on her way to the convent to begin life there as a probationer. Thus she is still a secular, and still wears the costume of a lady of rank. Her hair has not yet been cut off, nor is it even hidden from sight. The audience should realise that the Duke could not, and would not, have asked her to be his wife if to consent meant breaking a religious vow. Nor would Angelo have dared to tempt a woman already set apart to the service of God. Deceived by the theatrical notion that Shakespeare wrote his female characters for " star " actresses; obsessed by stage traditions, and by what " celebrated leading ladies " have done, the producer brings Isabella on to the stage as a religious figure! And to make matters worse, her dress was unrelieved white, although that of the Order of Saint Clare was grey. Moreover, this white costume was out of tone with the stage picture, so that the dark background had a white spot which in its prominence was a constant source of irritation to the eye. Nor did the actress's rendering of Isabella in any way correct this error or enable the audience to think of her as a secular. The cardinal mistake, however, was with the producer in not realising the subordinate position of Isabella in the action of

In the Playhouse.

the play. The women merely serve as foils in the story to throw the men into greater relief.
1918. Not that the latter are better in themselves as individuals, but they are far more interesting as character studies. Indeed, it is obviously an error to say that there are no good male parts in the play, for there are four excellent ones. The Duke is the central figure. He is hardly ever off the stage, but the part needs an actor of flexibility seldom to be found in this country. He must be the life and soul of the play. He should be able to show the Duke delighting in freedom from irksome duties. He should impersonate him as a man about forty, alert, full of resource and energy, adored by all for his easy-going and kindly ways; always helpful, never willing to hurt, and far too witty and wise for anyone to be dull in his company. In the spectator the righteous indignation of Isabella, the tears of Mariana, and the fears of Claudio, do not arouse painful emotions since the Duke watches over them and will not let them be injured through the shortcomings of his deputy. He deceives Isabella about her brother's death because she has publicly to charge Angelo with the crime she thinks he has perpetrated; only in this way can the deputy be made to feel how bitterly the innocent may suffer for the guilty. Interest in the last act centres in the conscience-stricken Angelo. Shame is his punishment, and he needs no heavier one. His undoing was an agony to himself because of the painful trial to which he had subjected Isabella.

In the Playhouse.

At the " Old Vic " the part of Angelo was altogether out of the picture, but Lucio and Claudio
1918. were good. Mariana's outburst in the last scene was the one inspiring moment in the play. The producer took the usual liberties with the text, and transpositions were made merely for the convenience of the scenery.

" The Stuttgart publisher has not accepted my book. My arguments and inferences were too
1915. daring for him, he feared giving offence through them. At present I am in negotiation with a Münich publisher. He wishes to have some expert opinions about me, that I possess the capabilities of writing a serious book, after having been forty years of my life actor, manager and producer, having published with success a great number of works belonging to the subject, and after spending the last 20 years of my theatrical career in Münich at the Royal Theatre, where I have got up more than 360 performances of Shakespearian Plays from the original text. Isn't that strange?"

An Actor Author.

This letter was written to me on the 1st December, 1913, and the writer of it passed to his rest at Münich on May the 7th of this year. Through the courtesy of the British and German postal authorities the news was allowed to reach me. Here, then, was another victim to the notion that it is only a university professor who can know

anything about Shakespeare worth putting into a book. Herr Savits as a young man became
1915. famous as an actor, and married a celebrated German actress. For some years he directed the Weimar and Mannheim Theatres, where he received the praises of princes, yet he threw in his lot with actors and did much to improve their social life by initiating a contributory pension scheme. He will go down to history as the pioneer of Elizabethan stage methods in Germany. It was on the Münich stage that he made the Elizabethan experiment, and it came about in this way. Baron Perfall, Intendant of the Royal Court Theatre in Münich, regretted that the Saxe-Meiningen Theatre should be receiving so much notice throughout Germany for its spectacular performances of Shakespeare, thus over-shadowing the finer histrionic efforts of Münich. Savits then suggested, by way of contrast, giving Shakespeare's plays at Münich with an Elizabethan setting. Permission was granted, and Savits set about adapting the stage and revolutionising the methods. The experiment was made with *King Lear,* and in 1890 I saw this play acted under Savits' direction at Münich. I was not quite satisfied with the setting, but it was the best cast and the most stimulating performance of the tragedy I have ever seen. In 1909 a London agent for many German papers and societies wrote to me, "As you know, in Germany, mostly through Herr Savits' indefatigable labour and great enthusiasm, the idea of using the 'Shake-

An Actor Author.

speare stage ' has been practised for many years, and has, in spite of many controversies, not been
1915. dropped entirely. On the contrary everything points to it being taken up again sooner or later."

I began correspondence with Herr Director Savits in 1908. We met twice. He came over to England in May, 1909, and in September, 1913, I spent a long sad day with him in Stuttgart, where his wife was dying. While in England he saw some of the Shakespeare performances at Stratford-on-Avon which did not please him. He asked the producers why they did not adopt the Elizabethan setting and received the candid reply, " Because we should have to alter all our methods." In London I took Savits to see *Macbeth*. At the conclusion we left the theatre together, I laughing a good deal, for Macbeth's fight with Macduff was quite the funniest thing in a wholly non-tragic performance. Savits, however, was wringing his hands while exclaiming, " Oh, Mr. Poel, this is not *Macbeth* !" The next day we went to see *Henry V.* This was a better performance, but there always came the same remark from him, " How tired your actors' voices are !"

An Actor Author.

No English theatrical manager could say he has done in twelve years the work worth doing that Savits did in one year. While Tree had produced *Hamlet* or *Julius Cæsar* and run it for 200 nights, Savits, in those 25 weeks in Münich, had given 12 different plays of Shakespeare, and 125 other plays, mostly classics. Now that

Savits sleeps in the Catholic cemetery at Münich I hope that professors and managers will be a
1915. little more tolerant towards his efforts to revive interest in the Elizabethan stage.

. . . . One must live with a play for a time and read it many times over before one can be sure
1918. of having grasped the dramatist's own point of view. My method is first to read a page here and there, and this I do in order to examine the dialogue. That is to say, to ascertain if the people are real characters, and if it is possible to recognise them individually without the help of the names. I take it for granted that in actual life everyone has some trait or mannerism in his voice or speech peculiar to himself. And more especially where there is a difference in sex, in age, or in education. Shakespeare uses a varied phraseology for his characters, whether he is writing verse or prose; he also contrasts the voices of the speakers, so as to get a sort of orchestral effect out of mere vocalisation. In *Twelfth Night,* if the play is properly cast, the selection of voices will be much as follows:

On Writing Verse-Plays.

Viola (Mezzo-Soprano); Olivia (Contralto); Sebastian (Alto); Antonio (Basso Profundo); Sir Toby (Bass); Sir Andrew (Falsetto); Malvolio (Baritone); Maria (High Soprano); Orsino (Tenor); Clown (Tenor).

I believe that Shakespeare is always conscious of the need for variety in sound and in time as
1918. means to sustain dramatic interest. In fact, the atmosphere, so to speak, of Elizabethan drama is created through the voice, that of modern drama through the sight. Lyricism, in the same way as alliteration, is used by Shakespeare in his plays as only one of the many means he employs to create varied sounds or cadences. I think, too, that the emotions are more easily stirred by the voice than through the eyes. At cinema shows a piano is played the whole time that the pictures are moving, giving a rhythmic sound without words. In a book of six plays I must challenge the method of versification because I think there is a want of variety in the vocabulary and therefore in the cadences. Then if I turn to the preface the author wrote for these six plays, I seem able to discover there the explanation, for he quotes a line spoken by Desdemona as being a perfect illustration of what dramatic poetry ought to be :

On Writing Verse-Plays.

" It yet hath felt no age, nor known no sorrow." Now in this line there are nine words of one syllable, and if this " simplicity and directness " were repeated throughout a whole page, to say nothing of a whole play, there would be that absence of change in time and tune which exists in much of this writer's verse. His argument, as quoted in the preface, I contend is inadmissible in drama. It does not apply to dialogue. A dramatist cannot simplify his vocabulary merely

to please his own taste. He uses the diction characteristic of the speaker. It may be only
1918. verbosity, as in the case of Polonius, and verbosity can be expressed in verse as well as any other idiosyncrasy.

On Writing Verse-Plays.

There is another technical detail which I miss in these plays, although it is not altogether absent, and that is the introduction of traits in the conversation intended to enable the audience to realise that the characters share the normal experiences of humanity. I do not at the moment recall that anyone in the plays asks some one else how he is, or talks with him about the weather, or names the hour of the day, or refers to ailments special to himself. But without some touches of the kind cropping up here and there in the dialogue, so as to reveal what are the manners and temperaments of the speakers, it is difficult for an audience to visualise the personages or to claim kinship with them. The opening scene of *Hamlet* is an instance of the kind of talk I mean.

Of the plays themselves, apart from these possible drawbacks, I have nothing but praise. Given the modern stage, and modern methods of acting, the plays in the hands of a producer who has skill and resource could certainly be acted so as to arouse and sustain interest. I rarely find them ill-constructed, even if I am out of sympathy with the verse medium through which they are presented. I think the prose passages more stimulating than those in verse—not because the verse is stilted, but because it is too limited in its

vocabulary to supply the actor with a sufficient diversity of tunes. I may say at once that there is
1918. nothing so good being acted on the stage here to-day as is found in these six plays, and that it is indeed a pity there is no machinery in this country to allow of their being produced.

A SHORT article, under an anonymous signature, recently appeared in an evening newspaper
1918. headed "The Recluse and the Music-Hall." To say that it was designedly written on behalf of the music-hall profession, to advocate its superiority as an entertainment over that of the theatre, might be going too far. But since there is an effective aim at style in the article which makes it eminently readable and amusing, it is the more to be regretted that the writer so entirely ignores in it the claims of dramatic art.

The Variety Stage.

Two brothers in khaki, with their parents, come to a Midland town, presumably Birmingham, to have, as it were, "a night out." The newspaper is consulted by way of making a choice, and preference is given to the Repertory Theatre, where Masefield's *Nan* will that evening be acted. The play is found to be morbid and the acting abominable. The family leave and arrive at the music-hall in time to hear a "fat man talking on the stage the same sort of drivel that Shakespeare's clowns talk sometimes," and

to hear Miss Marie Hall play a solo on the violin. And the two men in khaki and their parents want
1918. to know if they are to be regarded as Philistines because they preferred the entertainment at the music-hall to that of the theatre?

The Variety Stage.

The answer is as follows:—The object of a repertory theatre is to provide opportunity for the production of plays which cannot be seen at a so-called commercial theatre. The audience, as a rule, does not consist of those who consult a newspaper before deciding where they will spend the evening. Nor does the reputation of a repertory theatre depend upon the merit of one particular play, since some twenty or thirty pieces may be given during the season. Even the merit of a music-hall entertainment is not gauged by two items of its programme. Let it be granted that Masefield's play is morbid, and that when acted it fails to excite genuine tragic emotion. Yet, like Ford's *Broken Heart,* the play is of the literary and dramatic quality which has its place in the history of drama, and cannot be put on the shelf simply because it does not please everybody. And as regards the acting, there may well have been shortcomings, because those who might have acted this play with tragic intensity were not available. Their services were needed elsewhere. Some were doing their duty at the Front, while others, tempted by a good salary and a permanent engagement, had abandoned the regular theatre to "appear on the halls."

It is the same with the musician. When he

changes the concert platform for the stage of the music-hall he soon ceases to be a musician, and
1918. becomes merely a virtuoso. With a promise of a five-years' engagement at a weekly salary of three figures, a prominent pianist may be induced to sign a contract which will debar him from ever again playing in public except at a music-hall. And he may be tied down by his agent for the whole of his engagement to playing some three or four pieces in public, because out of many others these were found to be the most palatable to those who frequent the variety theatres.

The Variety Stage.

A well-lit music-hall, cushioned seats, ravishing tunes from the orchestra, the patter and clatter of the "comics," the high colour on the cheeks of the fair sex, their dazzling costumes—these allurements and an entertainment sympathetically disposed towards a pleasure-seeking life give permanent popularity to the music-hall variety "show" for those who live dull lives in dismal homes. To one in search of occasional amusement, a visit to the music-hall is appreciated for its novelty, and the precision, decision, and theatrical effectiveness with which the performers get through their work. But to the genuine playgoer, who is in the least interested in the study of character and drama, a weekly visit to the music-hall provides recreation of a kind which seems to him but a weary repetition of mechanical dexterity without a spark of inspiration or an ethical idea to give it reality. To the entertainer, the

monotony of his routine becomes almost unbearable, his daily thirty minutes' performance an in-
1918. tolerable drudgery; while his hours of enforced leisure spent weekly in a strange town are even more depressing to him than his work. Round the world he travels at the bidding of his master, the variety agent, often wondering if he can be a thing more alive than the ticking of his watch. There is probably no vocation so disastrous in its effect on character as that of the variety stage, whereas in a repertory theatre life for the actor is one of continuous industry and of mental and artistic effort.

From a careful study of the text in the Parnassus Trilogy* it may be inferred that two, if not
1919. three, people were employed in writing it. And although the prologues to all three plays were written with a view to misleading the University or College authorities as to the real object with which the plays were written, the plays themselves attempt no concealment. The wonder is that the comedies were ever allowed to be "publicly" acted. A possible explanation is that the approaching death of Elizabeth, and the question as to who should be her successor, so overshadowed all other matters among the ruling

A College Play.

* The names of the writers of this Trilogy are still unknown.

political classes and heads of Colleges that young discontents were left free to have their say.

1919. The short and modest prologue to the *Pilgrimage* is ostensibly addressed to the spectators as a whole, yet in reality it concerns certain privileged persons who may have been present and who would be the least likely to condone the satirical portions of the drama. From these the author seeks indulgence, and failing to obtain it will use his pen to other purpose.

A College Play.

The second prologue is written by a very different hand in a very different temper to the one which opened the *Pilgrimage*. There are to be no more modest utterances and servile attitudes on the part of the authors towards their audience. As was anticipated, the biting wit of Ingenioso, in the first play, gave offence; the writer was discredited and presumably he surrendered to others the task of showing the woes of discontented scholars. After the manner of Ben Jonson, the prologue jeers at the ignorance of the carping crowd, which, if uneducated, had assembled to very little purpose to listen to a play replete with Latin quotations! Possibly the audience accepted this prologue as a specious bit of "bluff" intended to raise merriment! For the authors, by assuming that the audience was an illiterate one, could exercise more freedom in the use of their satire. And in asserting that the original writer was silenced, the uninformed would naturally think that his successors had no share in his indiscretion. More

especially in the last line does the prologue hint that behind the writers now stood someone of
1919. sufficient authority in the college to render them impervious to attack from the victims of their satire. Perhaps this authority was William Holland, who is mentioned by Professor Moore Smith as being Senior Fellow and Principal Lecturer of St. John's College, 1599-1605.

A College Play.

The prologue to the third and last part of the Trilogy seems to be designed on the same lines as the prologue to the second play, that is with the object of amusing the audience, while at the same time serving the purpose of diverting general attention from the fact that the Trilogy was a satirical composition of the first importance. For instance, while the prologue does not attempt to conceal the popularity of the first two plays, it affects to regard them as unworthy of the interest they undoubtedly excited. And moreover we are told that the value of the third play must be discounted because it was a year old—which was not true, as the text shows! That it was announced as the last play to be written on the subject may have been due to the Fellows of St. John's College refusing to become sponsors any longer for performances which were increasingly exposing the drawbacks of University life. Nor will the prologue allow that this last play had been written by those responsible for the composition of the first two plays—a denial also at variance with the text! Then the audience are reminded that as the incidents

do not concern Parnassus (Cambridge) the play, of course, is a bad one, and the patience of the
1919. " refined wits " who crowd the College Hall is asked, not on behalf of a story of love or romance, but merely to show a scholar's scorned fortunes and unpitied fate.

A College Play.

Finally, the closing lines of the Trilogy make absolutely conclusive the object for which the comedies were written :—

Inge : Meane time if there be any spightfull Ghost,
That smiles to see poore schollers misery
Cold his charity, his wit too dull,
We scorne his censure, he a jeering gull.
But whatsoere refinéd sprights there be,
That deepely grone at our Calamity :
Whose breath is turned to sighes, whose eyes are wet,
To see bright arts bent to their latest set,
Whence never they againe their heads shall reere,
To blesse our art-disgracing hemispheere.

Inge : Let them
Fur : Let them
Phan. : Let them
} All give us a *plaudite.*

Acad. : And none but THEM.

Phil. : And none but THEM.

Stud. : And none but THEM.

In the whole range of Elizabethan drama no more pointed appeal, made from the stage to

one section only of the audience, can be found.

1919. With what, then, were "poor scholars" at the two Universities in Shakespeare's time discontented? With their lot; that after taking their degree, even with honours, they could obtain no better employment to earn a livelihood than menial work. This condition of affairs is shown in the Trilogy, and treated with the highest creative skill. In the first play the students arrive at Parnassus to take up their studies, after running the gauntlet of ridicule first from the Tippler, who maintains that one pint of wine can inspire more wit than all the nine muses; then from the plodding Puritan, who, because he has not enough ability to take his degree, pretends to despise the arts; then from the Wanton, and finally from Ingenioso, who has shown philosophy "a faire paire of heeles." The second and third plays give the adventures of the students on their return from Parnassus, and the uncongenial work that was forced upon them by their poverty. It is true that the poor scholars are a truculent lot, contemptuous of their superiors, unstable and unprincipled, while one of them is a drunkard, and none of them pay their just debts. But these failings the authors have somewhat ungenerously imposed upon the young men, first perhaps to maintain throughout the plays a comic and not a tragic note, and secondly in order to soften what otherwise would not have been tolerated

A College Play.

by many of the audience present, that is the bitter satire on the privileged classes. Yet, 1919. underneath all the fun and the ridicule, one is made to feel that the poor scholars have a real grievance, and one which the writers of the plays themselves have only too much experienced. But, as a commentator says :— *A College Play.*

"The whining monotone at last gets on our nerves. The true disciples of the Muses take the buffets of fortune more serenely. These Cambridge scholars might have learnt something from the cheerful fortitude of Chaucer's Clerk of Oxenford, content with little so long as he had his Aristotle by his side."

But this point of view hardly does justice to the poor scholars' complaint. What they upheld, and rightly, was that if learning could not hold its own in the world and enjoy competence and dignity, then mankind would lapse into mere barbarism. At the same time there is a number of rhymed passages in the plays which, if spoken in a whining tone, would certainly create a feeling of monotony among the audience. On the stage, however, the effect might have been not unpleasing, because these passages could have been brought into harmony with the spirit of comedy in which the plays are undoubtedly conceived. If these exercises in "capping of rhymes," as Studio explains them, were spoken to give the impression that they were being extemporised as an illustration of ingenuity in the invention of rhyming words, the sentences

might then be delivered rapidly in a joking way and possibly with some comic action. Through-
1919. out the Trilogy there are dispersed no less than seven of these rhyming duets, consisting each of nine or ten couplets. It is difficult to believe that these repetitions would have been tolerated by an intelligent audience unless there was some method employed as suggested by which they could be made interesting. One of these series is appended, in modern spelling :—

A College Play.

Phil.: Th'arts are unkind that do their sons neglect.

Stud.: Unkinder friends that scholars do reject.

Phil.: Dissembling arts looked smoothly on our youth.

Stud.: But load our age with discontent and ruth.

Phil.: Friends foolishly us to this woe do train.

Stud.: Fickle Apollo promised future gain.

Phil.: We want the prating coin, the speaking gold.

Stud.: Yea, friends are gainèd by that yellow mould.

Phil.: Adieu, Parnassus! I must pack away.

Stud.: Fountains, farewell, where beauteous nymphs do play.

Phil.: In Helicon no more I'll dip my quill.

Stud.: I'll sing no more upon Parnassus' Hill.

Phil.: Lets talk no more, since no relief we find.

Stud.: In vain to score our losses on the wind.

As to who were the authors of this remarkable Trilogy there seems to be no available clue

beyond what can be constructed out of a careful perusal of the several texts.

1919. Thus, for the present, the last word which can be put forward with any assurance on the question of authorship is that of Mr. Hawkins, who confesses that the plays seem to have been composed "by the wits and scholars of Cambridge." And to this extent, at least, Hawkins' opinion stands good, that the Trilogy is not the work of a single writer. If there had been but one author, not only would the name have become known in due time, but a man capable of such versatility in characterisation and treatment of drama, of such excellence in the writing of both verse and prose, of both tragic and comic scenes, would assuredly have become prominent among contemporary writers. And the text itself seems to show that there were at least two writers, since the author of the *Pilgrimage* is supposed to have ceased making further contributions to the Trilogy owing to the trouble he had got into with the authorities over the first composition. Then the words in the *Returne II.* prologue, "the Authors [*sic*] wit," may refer to more than one writer. Again, Kempe, the actor, in addressing Philomusus and Studioso alludes to them as "lusty humorous poets," apparently inferring that the two discontented scholars were themselves the authors of the much-talked-about plays.

A College Play.

Further, a comparison of the verse in the *Pilgrimage* and *Returne I.* suggests that a new

writer was collaborating in the composition of the latter play, for much of the verse shows a
1919. freedom of handling and an approach to conversational dialogue that is not to be found in the rhyming couplets of the *Pilgrimage*.

A College Play.

But in spite of touches here and there of true poetic feeling and grace, which might well be the composition of the writer responsible for the verses in the *Pilgrimage*, the dramatic merit of the three comedies depends to a far less extent on quality of verse than on that of prose. One of the contributing authors stands out pre-eminently as a comic writer of genius. If not responsible for creating any special character in the *Returne, I* or *II*, yet he clearly contributes a large part of Ingenioso's dialogue, of Luxurio's and of Furor's; and he supplies Philomusus and Studioso with some of their prose speeches and puts life into them whenever he speaks for them. His writing can be more easily traced than that of the other contributors by the ease with which it can be spoken, by its buoyancy and fun. The comic dramatists of the Restoration would have envied him his irrepressible wit, and blamed him for the carelessness with which he made use of it, since it is not always appropriate to the character who speaks it. Here is a description of an incident at a bookstall :—

"Presently this great linguist will march through Paules Church-yard. Come to a book binder's shop and with a big Italian looke and a Spanish face aske for three bookes in Spanish

and Italian, then turning, through his ignorance, the wrong end of the booke upward use action
1919. on this vnknowne tong after this sort,—first looke on the title and wrinckle his browe, next make as though he had red the first page and bites a lip, then with his nayle score the margent as there were some notable conceit, and lastly when he thinks he hath gulld the standers by sufficiently, throwes the booke away in a rage, swearing that hee could never finde bookes of a true printe since he was last in Padua, enquires after the next marte, and so departes."

A College Play.

The chief difficulty, however, about the authors, is to apportion to them their individual share in the composition of the Trilogy. Nor does the assertion that one of them was a comic writer of genius help matters, because his work cannot be altogether identified with those comic characters which are the outstanding feature in two of the comedies. For these characters use a phraseology which differs with each speaker. They are "oddities" who, apparently, were brought on to the stage because they had idiosyncrasies of speech and manner associated doubtless with well-known residents in Cambridge. There is, of course, a good deal of art shown by the author in selecting suitable dialogue for these characters to speak, but the talk is not originated by the authors; it represents the actual words these Cambridge folk spoke. The scene between Sir Randell and Immerito is a bit out of real life; absurd as it is, it is not a

satire. The same may be said of Gullio's scenes, and of Percival's speeches, and those of
1919. the tailors and of the carrier. Moreover, readers of these plays have before them the very words spoken by the London actors, Burbage and Kempe. Possibly the two college graduates, to whom the words were spoken, themselves recorded the incidents in the playbook. Kempe's remark to Burbage about amateurs who cannot walk about the stage while they are talking is a piece of professional jargon which could only have been understood among actors. The Cambridge novices noted the words but could not have invented them. As to Gullio, the stage never saw his equal before, for the portraiture is not marred by caricature. It is in fact taken from life in order to please those who knew him in life, and who would have resented the obtrusion of exaggeration merely for theatrical effect. This Gullio had been in Ireland with Lord Essex before the insurrection, at least so he says. Judging from a lilt in his speech the man might well have been an Irishman for Hibernicism seems to season a phrase such as: "I'le ate a bit of phesaunte and drincke a cupp of wine in my cellar, and straight to the courte I'le go;" and again, when he mutters, "But I will have noe knave priste to medle with my ringe." At times we seem to hear Sir Lucius O'Trigger's voice when the braggart exclaims: "I had bene the death of one of our pulinge Liteltonians for passinge by mee in the Moore

A College Play.

Fildes unsaluted, but that there was noe historiographer by to have recorded it." Sir John
1919. Davies, of the same period, describes a Gull, and certainly used as his model this Cambridge hero. Here is a passage :—

A College Play.

"A Gull is he which wears good handsome clothes,
And stands in Presence stroking up his hair,
And fills up his imperfect speech with oaths,
But speaks not one wise word throughout the year."

It will be remembered that Gullio says: "I stood stroking up my haire, which became me very admirably, gave a low congey at the beginning of each period, made every sentence end sweetly with an othe."

To sum up the argument, it is possible to hazard the opinion that three or four writers were at work upon the comedies. Nor is it believed that the undergraduate, who wrote the greater part of the *Pilgrimage,* ceased to collaborate in the other two plays. One of the writers excelled as a wit, and one had a feeling for poetry. The plays do not reflect the work of London men or those of the theatre; they are the composition of very observant Cambridge students who were keen-witted enough to expose the follies and vices of their elders. No trace is there of the practised hand, and this seems to discount the notion that the many interesting and varied characters who appear in *Returne I.* and *II.* are the creation of one author.

Yet in spite of the division of labour there is no slackening of purpose. All the writers recog-
1919. nise that what is being written is worth writing, and that they have a message which needs to be thrust home. It is quite possible that when the *Pilgrimage* was written there was no thought of its being the first play of a Trilogy, but Ingenioso's lines roused rebellion among the younger men against the accepted notion of a "joyful returne" from Parnassus. Another play had to be written by bolder spirits to show that pilgrims to Parnassus did not return "triumphant with their laurel boughs"! Then the success of this second play created a demand for yet another blast of satire, so that a third play was written to emphasise with fresh illustrations what was said before. The three plays, therefore, do not in the legitimate sense of the word constitute a Trilogy; they are merely three Elizabethan comedies.

A College Play.

The interest attached to these plays on account of their connexion with Shakespeare has been, perhaps, over-emphasised by the commentators. What the authors say of him is misleading because their knowledge of his work was imperfect. None of them seem to have seen his plays acted since they refer to printed copies, such as the two poems and *Romeo and Juliet.* It has been before pointed out by the present writer that the common opinion of the day in regard to Shakespeare, until 1600, was that he wrote only love stories. This idea was due to the great

popularity of his first poem. Kempe's reference to Shakespeare is noteworthy because it con-
1919. firms the opinion of the playwright, Robert Greene, that the actor-dramatist was not held in esteem by the University playwrights owing to his lack of a college education. Indeed, it cannot be too often stated that these comedies stand on their own merits (apart from any mention of the name of Shakespeare) and, in their way, nothing else in Elizabethan drama can compare with them.

Peace Pageant.

*THROUGHOUT, the stage management of the pageant was excellent, there was no confusion,
1919. no sense of hurry; no obvious mistakes were made, all knew their several duties and did them easily; no shouting, no talking except in whispers, no words of command were heard. The huge procession was set in motion, no one knew how, except that two mounted policemen and six of the Household Cavalry were seen to pass through the Albert Gate. Then came the American forces, 1,400 strong, led by General Pershing, an English type of man with hair turning grey, and as a soldier not specially distinctive. His men looked grim enough, perhaps owing to the ugly flat helmets they wore. Doggedness was

* A description of the Victory March through London after the Great War.

their characteristic, and all of them looked as if they had been turned out of one mould; but their
1919. massed colours made a gay patch in a stretch of dismal khaki. Belgians followed, 400 strong, in drab overcoats, their band leading; men not without a touch of character and animation, and the same may be said of the Serbians. As to the Greeks, Poles, Rumanians, Czecho-Slovakians, Chinese, Japanese, Siamese, their contingents, each fifty strong, were too small to be individually impressive; their countenances were inscrutable. The start off of the French troops was dramatic, led by Foch, the most arresting figure in the pageant. On a tall charger sat a short man, slight in build but straight in the back and firmly seated in the saddle, wearing a grey-blue tunic and red-peak cap, heavily braided with gold. His features clean cut, hands small, the right one holding a marshal's baton. His head erect and immovable, eyes downcast, complexion pale, countenance very grave; over it passed a slight quiver of sensibility as the only apparent recognition of the great demonstration made by the public, when he rode from under the shadow of the trees to take position at the head of his soldiers. The pose of his military figure was impressive and raised emotions akin to those felt on looking at a picture of Napoleon. Possibly, on the whole, the impression was finer because more spiritual. To the onlooker it conveyed a sense of achievement due to indomitable will, singleness of purpose and directness of vision. These qualities were not

Peace Pageant.

apparent to the same extent elsewhere in the peace pageant. Hence the feeling of confidence
1919. and admiration that Foch's presence aroused. And the French are born warriors. Who can forget the tramp of those men, or the triumphant note of their hundred buglers, or the cruel suggestiveness of their long bayonets tapering to the sharpness of needles!

Peace Pageant.

A great reception was given, particularly to the French, Belgian, and Serbian troops. This might have been expected, for the Americans were the last to come into the war. Yet this is hardly fair comment. When war broke out no one thought it the business of America to join in the struggle, chiefly in view of the Monroe doctrine. But when the world was in peril, through Germany's abuse of her submarine power, the situation was altered. History may declare that the coming in of America was the determining factor in the war. The outlook at that time for the Allies was not a favourable one.

An overheard remark, obviously partial, because spoken by a fellow countryman, gave praise to the Englishman for his superiority in comeliness and character over other nationalities. And, indeed, when our sailors and soldiers followed in the Victory March, comparison seemed inevitable. In stature and stamina, in apparent frankness, love of fair play, generosity, good humour, cleanliness, godliness, these men seemed to excel. One felt they were the makers of history, the pioneers of freedom, wherever freedom is wanted, and

sometimes where it is not wanted! Of course it may be argued that such terms are purely fanci-
1919. ful, since what is pleasing in the appearance of English people is strangely elusive and indefinite when one tries to put it into words. And we are not a brainy people; not a people of ideas, of imagination, of invention; we are not artists; we like to compromise, especially in matters connected with religion and politics. Moreover, a country which has many churches and political institutions heavily endowed is apt to perpetuate obscurantism among people who are simple and ingenuous. The saddest of all sights is that of a well-meaning race which has become the tool of those who think that nothing matters in the life of a nation but what is of gross and material advantage. To a country so misled there must come a day of awakening. And to say this is not to express sympathy with the tyrannical aims of bigotry, whether they are to be found in Carlton-house Terrace or in the public-house. Extremists bind and gag themselves with their own hands; not conscious of their own limitations they are confused by imaginary bugbears and illusive schemes.

Peace Pageant.

As to the peace pageant, it is significant that the poorer classes were not largely represented, and that labour men apparently absented themselves. On the other hand, shopkeepers with their wives and children were to be seen everywhere.

Peace Day, however, has achieved one notable

triumph affecting the future welfare of the people's amusements. The Government commissioned the
1919. public to organise their own entertainments and granted the necessary funds. For the first time in the annals of holiday-making the theatrical element, with its hideous exhibitions of vulgarity, was absent. The English people were themselves again.

SHAKESPEARE'S theatrical career, in its external features, is simple and clear. Only the first years
1924. after his arrival in London are obscure, or, rather, absolutely blank. There are no foundations whatever for the legends about his beginning his stage life by holding the spectators' horses during performances, or by organising a company of boys for that purpose, or by helping the "bookholder" as call-boy. These reports are of very late origin, and the thought that they may possibly be true is certainly not sufficient reason for accepting them. But from the moment when Shakespeare entered into the full light of stage history until he retired to his native town, wearied by the labour and toil of London life, his career is plain. During those active years he belonged uninterruptedly to a dramatic company which, from the beginning to the end of his life on the stage, was financed and controlled by James Burbage's sons, Cuthbert and Richard.

Shakespeare in London.

If, indeed, we must fall back upon conjecture in order to realise how Shakespeare spent his
1924. time in London between, say, 1587 and 1592, there is no reason for ignoring the work he had fulfilled as an author before we hear of his writing for the common stage. Most scholars agree that he had written several comedies before 1594, in addition to his poems and sonnets. Yet of these plays there exists no reference to any having been acted on the *public* stage before 1598, while the absence of information about them, and why they were written, indicates that Shakespeare was apprenticed elsewhere than to a company of players when he first came to London. Let us presume, then, as has been stated, that he began earning his livelihoood as a schoolmaster or lawyer in the country for some five years before 1587. We may also assert, with Aubrey, that "This William, being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London." But we have still to explain how he obtained his inspiration for writing plays which were of a kind entirely unsuited for Burbage's playhouse, "The Theater." One point seems clear, namely that the dramatist must have written the plays either to be read in MS. or to be privately acted. The former supposition would at least explain Francis Meres' mention of them, also why Gabriel Harvey could allude to Shakespeare's play *Hamlet,* showing it must have been in existence some years before the unauthorised version known as the first Quarto appeared in print.

Shakespeare in London.

After all, was it not easier for Shakespeare, on his first coming to the City, to be attached to
1924. a nobleman's establishment than to a theatre? For dependents who resided in the houses of the nobility far outnumbered the hirelings who waited on the actors. In the summer of 1588 Shakespeare, as a Warwickshire yeoman, may have found himself in Leicester's house by the Thames, where help would be needed to resist the invasion of the Spanish Armada. At the end of that year Leicester was dead, and Essex became the owner of his stepfather's residence. Here Shakespeare would have come under the notice of Lady Southampton and might have received employment, congenial to his talents, as a scrivener, a secretary, or even as master of the revels, which would have given scope for his literary and dramatic proclivities. Southampton's father was a Catholic, and Shakespeare's mother belonged to a Catholic family, while priests and many "suspects" were known to frequent Southampton's house. There was no place in London more likely to provide the poet-dramatist with opportunity to observe life from its many varied aspects, political, intellectual and religious.

Shakespeare in London.

In Elizabethan days grades of society were so clearly defined that intercourse between persons of different status was possible without danger of annoyance on either side. Spenser was not paid for writing his poems, but he hoped to get preferment by this means, and the publication of the

first three volumes of " The Faerie Queene " won for him the positon of private secretary to Lord
1924. Grey of Wilton. Also after the next three books were published and dedicated to the Queen she gave him a pension worth £300 a year in modern money. When living in London Spenser would make his home in Leicester's house, he being regarded as the chief of patrons. So also with Shakespeare. He may have sojourned at Southampton's house and have there found models and types for his plays, since it was not to tickle the ears of the groundlings that the poet weaved such a texture of mingled fantasy and airy wit in his first dramatic efforts. It was, on the contrary, to amuse the ladies and gentlemen of the Court who visited young Southampton and his mother, and who were the originals of his exquisite women and noblemen. Such could not have been intimately observed from occasional visits to the two public theatres. If, then, Shakespeare's education as a dramatist can be traced first to the Grammar School of Stratford-on-Avon, and afterwards to some experience as a schoolmaster, yet the employment he found in London must have been of a literary nature to allow him leisure to study, besides giving him contact with men and women of culture, since he wrote for their entertainment seven original plays, two long poems, and over sixty sonnets.

Shakespeare in London.

Again, therefore, arises the puzzling question, how did Shakespeare get through all this composition if at the same time he was fulfilling his

duties as an actor for Burbage? It is significant that on the two occasions, in 1592, when mention
1924. was made of his being an actor, no information was given to identify the company of players to which he was attached, an unusual omission regarding those working in a theatre who did not wish to be looked upon as vagabonds! And how came this player to be writing chronicle plays and using dialogue which had been appropriated from other writers? The complainer, Robert Greene, maintained that this "Shake-scene" supposes that he can write better blank verse than can the University wits, being in fact in his own estimation a veritable "Jack of all trades"!

Shakespeare in London.

There can be little doubt that from his first arrival in London Shakespeare must have made writing and not acting his chief occupation, for the amount of literary and dramatic composition that exists to-day, and which is indisputably identified as consisting of his earliest writings, fully justifies Chettle's contemporary description of the young dramatist's "facetious grace in writing." But publishers were poor paymasters, and patrons uncertain in fulfilling their promises. How, then, could Shakespeare earn an actor's livelihood and also find time to write for Southampton's friends? Who was the financier, Burbage or Southampton? These are questions which students can decide for themselves.

To the cultured classes, in Elizabethan times, drama was less interesting and important than other forms of poetry. Such dramatic taste as

they had was chiefly classical. The wives of the aristocracy were rarely seen at the public play-
1924. houses, and when they came there they wore their masks. The privilege of entertaining the Queen herself had been at one time a monopoly of the Choir Boys, known as the Children of Pauls, and of the Chapel Royal, and it was due to the special interest taken in such performances that a disproportionate number of the plays preserved, by varied writers, are those which were acted by the boys. Later on, Chapman and Jonson had the distinction of writing plays which, because they were privately acted by children, could deal effectively with subjects forbidden on the common stages. The prices of admission were high, the lowest being eight shillings in modern money. Altogether it was natural that the courtiers and their friends would flock to the children's plays at the Blackfriars, which were regarded as academic performances, while keeping aloof from the ordinary playhouses.

Shakespeare in London.

It was a shrewd move, then, on the part of young Shakespeare to solicit patronage where it could be soonest bestowed. He must have known that he who could draw his inspirations direct from nature, and not from books, would be able to write verses and plays to please a court audience, for experience has proved that poets can be found in every rank of life. What was said of Burns, when he first visited Edinburgh, applies with similar truth to the poet-dramatist on finding himself in the house of Southampton. For

Scotsmen proclaimed that " All the faculties of Burns's mind were equally vigorous, and his
1924. predilection for poetry was but the outcome of his enthusiastic temperament." Judging from his conversation they realised that he was " fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he chose to exert his abilities."

Shakespeare in London.

Perhaps we are apt to forget that the turning point in Shakespeare's career came about by his writing not a play, but a poem, one written in the happiest circumstances because in the conviction that it would please the youthful Southampton to whom it was dedicated. Apart from its general popularity, the publication of "Venus and Adonis" brought the author not only prestige but emolument. And the poet's success became the more evident when he was summoned to act before the Queen in one of his own comedies, and appeared later before the Benchers of Gray's Inn in what proved to be a *Night of Errors*!

Apparently Shakespeare never wrote to please himself. He chose his material to reflect the moods and incidents of life as they appealed to his patrons, provided always that the characters obeyed the laws of nature and probability. In this way he satisfied his artistic sense of fitness, while his audience, or readers, found in his pages recreation and stimulation. It mattered little to him whether it was a poem, a sonnet, a comedy, or a tragedy that he had to write, for he knew well enough he had sufficient talent to succeed in whatever he attempted. When Shakespeare,

however, wrote " Venus and Adonis," and had arrived at the object he had in view, he found that
1924. Chapman, Nashe, and other poets began writing similar compositions and dedicating them to Shakespeare's patron under the plea that the favoured poet's " *wanton* muse did not offend " ! Shakespeare, therefore, determined to treat the theme of chastity, a subject which he handled with the greatest skill and delicacy. " Venus " had delighted the young folk, and now their elders were shown that he was capable of another flight. This he accomplished in his poem on " poore Lucrece," by which he learnt that the best work is seldom the most popular.

Shakespeare in London.

For in a very short time " Venus," the " first heir " of his invention, had run through five editions, when " Lucrece " had only reached two !

But the publication of "Lucrece" gave Shakespeare at least the recognition he desired to have as a writer of classical poetry. And in his dedication to Southampton he used words that never before had been sanctioned by custom or privilege in an address of the kind. For he writes . . . . " The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of your acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours, being part in *all* I have devoted yours . . . . ." The words, indeed, of this second dedication, not only seem to indicate that the previous poem had been accepted in a friendly spirit by the patron, but they also show that Shakespeare had

in some way been rewarded for his labour and was hinting at the possibility of being received
1924. permanently into employment at Southampton House, much as was Florio, the Italian tutor, who, when living there, used almost the same words in acknowledging his own indebtedness,— "In whose pay and patronage I have lived some years, to whom I owe and vow the years I have to live."

Shakespeare in London.

Shakespeare obviously was not pre-eminent as an actor; neither was he famed for his lyrical gifts. And while he knew he could compete with the so-called University Wits, Peele, Greene, Lodge, and Nashe, in writing plays, in the realm of pure poetry there stood the names of Sidney, Marlowe, Drayton, and Spenser. Of the last named, though, it was said, by Gabriel Harvey, that he had written nine comedies, yet not one of them had ever been acted. And the antagonism of the scholars against Shakespeare, as a playwright, was increased by the patronage and friendship which Southampton accorded him. For the poet had promptly written sonnets to his "friend," to confirm the rumour spread abroad of the intimacy existing between his young patron and himself. Thus the growth of his own social and literary prestige intensified the rancour of his detractors, who showed their malice by publishing a scandalous poem in which Shakespeare is seen aiding and abetting his "friend," Henry Wriothesley (Southampton), in a love affair with Avisa, the

wife of an Oxford tavern keeper. This scurrilous work, which was suppressed after its first
1924. edition by order of the censor, led to Shakespeare writing his sonnets about "the dark Lady," when he exposed the libel by showing that Avisa, although a real person, was not fair, not modest, and not a constant wife, in fact the exact opposite to the description of her in the poem of "Willobie his Avisa"!

Shakespeare in London.

It is said that Shakespeare's sonnets are intensely personal in feeling; therefore it is presumed that in them the poet was expressing his affection for his patron. If this were so it would be necessary to argue that Shakespeare, without killing his own wife, could not have found suitable words to describe Othello's grief. Fortunately it is enough if a dramatic poet describes what he sees, and not necessarily what he feels. He can then exclaim—"Never came counterfeit so near the life of passion"—as is shown in the sonnets. So long as writing poetry implies special knowledge and skill in the handling of words, apart from other necessary gifts, the attention of the writer must be concentrated on the technical side of his work before the critic will be willing to pronounce the verdict,—

"So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn!"

No! These literary and poetical exercises of Shakespeare's contained half-concealed allusions to the politics or love intrigues of the time; they were surely not written to expose the shortcomings of either the poet or his friend. That in

the Sonnets Shakespeare confesses that the author had no better means of livelihood than that of a
1924. common player, was clearly a statement made with a veiled purpose. Shakespeare, in fact, had taken up the vocation of a player for economic reasons. As a player he could become a share-holder in a company of players, and in this way he could make his fortune, thus reaping the full share of the gains his writings would bring to the Globe playhouse.

Shake-speare in London.

The Sonnets covered a period from 1593, or shortly afterwards, to 1603. Both in them and in the early plays and comedies we often find the rare beauty of expression which is in the poems, and the same alternating rhymes, with the interest centring round a youth who has not yet reached manhood. While, then, the Earls of Oxford and of Derby were writing comedies for the common players, it is not impossible to think that Shakespeare himself was busy as master of the revels at Southampton House.

The remaining point to be noticed in regard to Shakespeare's relations with his patron, Southampton, is the exceptional advantages he would have enjoyed as a regular member of that household. In this way he might have been at Cowdray when the Queen, on one of her progresses, visited Lady Southampton; there are reminiscences, apparently, of this event in one of his earliest comedies. Shakespeare, also, would have been able to make frequent visits to Gray's Inn at which Southampton had been entered as a member;

and the reign of Elizabeth was called the golden age for legal education. It is on record, 1924. too, that in 1594 the poet-player may have been among those in a revelry, at that Inn, known then as a *Night of Errors*. The same winter his name appeared with those of Kempe and Burbage in the royal treasury accounts, in payment for two productions at Greenwich Palace. It is thought that Shakespeare's interlude, *The Comedy of Errors* was acted then, and it is to be noted that this is the only recorded occasion of his receiving payment on behalf of Burbage's company. Here we may see the influence of Southampton's mother, Lady Hunsdon, widow of the Lord Chamberlain.

Shakespeare in London.

In the list of plays given below, it is assumed that all were written to be acted, or read, privately, and those marked with an asterisk are known to have been privately acted.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona, *Love's Labour's Lost, Love's Labour's Won, *Comedy of Errors, *Midsummer Night's Dream, Merchant of Venice, *Richard II, *Richard III, Romeo and Juliet,* and *Hamlet, Quarto 2.* (1598?)

To Shakespeare the year 1598 brought a real crisis in his existence. Was his future to consist of a life of pensioned indolence in a house of luxury, or was he to struggle on in that seething pot of theatrical mummery—a brief chronicler in an epoch-making time? In his sonnets he had told Southampton of the many hardships of

the actor's calling, but not what were its rewards. There may have been a momentary de-
1924. sire on his part that Southampton would free him from the necessity of becoming one of the fraternity of "rogues and vagabonds," but prudence prevailed and posterity emphatically declares that Shakespeare chose the better way.

By his work, and by what those said of it who had the intelligence to appreciate his rare poetic and dramatic gifts, was he to be known down the centuries.

Conspiracy Plays.

Conspiracy plays held the stage in Elizabethan and Jacobean times with a persistency which can only be explained when it is remembered that those plays gave the dramatists opportunity to reflect the political and religious controversies of their own country. No one realised better than the English people that a complete acknowledgment of the papal authority was incompatible with obedience to the civil power, and that an act of treason by those who, rightly or wrongly, were held to be religious enemies of the State, could not go unpunished. As a preventive measure, therefore, to check conspiracies against the Royal Prerogative, from 1570 onwards until the commonwealth, every resident in England was compelled to take the oath of allegiance to the reigning Sovereign, the alternative, in the event of refusal, being death or banishment. In

these circumstances, then, the Government would not be likely to countenance the acting of plays that did not uphold loyalty to the throne or that represented the revolutionist on the stage in a sympathetic light. Thus Shakespeare's play of *Richard the Second* was censured for showing the King in the act of being forced to abdicate, and this scene was not allowed to be acted, or even to be printed, during the Queen's lifetime. Again, Shakespeare was in trouble with the Privy Council for having in his play of *Julius Cæsar* represented two of the assassins, Brutus and Cassius, as being patriots. Probably it was for this reason that the play never got published in quarto form, and did not appear in print before 1623. Even Ben Jonson did not escape censure in writing his play of *Sejanus*.

Conspiracy Plays.

When Shakespeare created Falstaff for the amusement of his patrons at Shoreditch, he may have done so with the intention of writing no more Chronicle plays, since Florio had ridiculed them for being "neither right tragedy nor right comedy." The void was filled by writing proper comedies, such as *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and "Biographical" plays. These latter represented the lives and actions of contemporary persons and, as such, they provided material for serious drama. But after the Essex insurrection, when Londoners were threatened with more Conspiracy plays, the Privy Council forbade the representation on the stage of English men of note. Yet so long as there was a demand for those kind

of plays the supply was forthcoming. Shakespeare and Jonson took their incidents and characters from Rome, while Chapman, the principal contributor to the group of Conspiracy plays, found his in France. Below are given the names of some of these plays that were written between 1594 and 1624:

Conspiracy Plays.

1596, Richard the Second.—*Shakespeare.*

I am Richard II., know ye not that?—*Queen Elizabeth.*

1596, Sir Thomas More.—*Munday, Dekker and others.*

I hate these phrases:—"Of power absolute"
"Of full authorite" "Of proper motion"
The devine laws they have trod under foote
And humane too; for private man's promotion.
—*du Bartas.*

1596? Captain Thomas Stukely.—*Authors unknown.*

The feare that springs from love and reverence
A firme support to Royall Greatnes gives
But he that makes him fear'd for violence
Himselfe feares most, and in distrust still lives.
—*du Bartas.*

1599, *Julius Cæsar.—*Shakespeare.*

Verses written on the play in 1623.

So have I seen when Cæsar would appear
And on the stage at half sword parley were
Brutus and Cassius. Oh! how the audience
Were ravished, with what wonder they went thence.

1601, Massacre at Paris, Revived.—*Marlowe.*

Thus Cæsar did go forth and thus he dies.

—*Duke of Guise.*

1602, Thomas Lord Cromwell.—*Author unknown.*

I died for Treason, boy, and never knew it.

—*Lord Cromwell.*

Conspiracy Plays.

1603, *Sejanus His Fall.—*Ben Jonson.*

And not a beast of all the herd demands
What was his crime, or who were his accusers,
Under what proof of testimony he fell
They follow Fortune, and hate men condemned,
Guilty or not!

—*Lepidus.*

1604, Bussy D'Ambois.—*George Chapman.*

Who to himself is law, no land doth need,
Offends no law, and is a king indeed.

—*Bussy.*

1604, "Gowry," A Tragedy.—*Author unknown.*

A play no longer extant, acted by the Globe players and suppressed because it brought the King on to the stage as one of the characters.

1605, If You Know Not Me, You Know No Bodie.—*Thomas Heywood.*

Plays have taught subjects obedience to their King, and to show the people the untimely ends of such as have moved tumults, commotions and insurrections.

T.H. 1612.

1607, The Biron Plays.—*George Chapman.*

The matchless Earl of Essex who some make
(In their most sure divinings of my death)
A parallel with me in life and future. . . .
The Queen of England
Told me that if the wilful Earl of Essex
Had us'd submission, and but asked her mercy,
She would have given it great resumption.
—*Biron.*

Conspiracy Plays.

1608, Antony and Cleopatra.—*Shakespeare.*

Wars 'twixt you twain would be;
As if the world should cleave. . . .
—*Octavia.*

1609, Coriolanus.—*Shakespeare.*

The man was noble,
But with his last attempt he wip'd it out.
—*Volumnia.*

1610, The Revenge of Bussy.—*George Chapman.*

There's no disputing with the acts of Kings,
Revenge is impious on their sacred persons.
—*Clermont.*

1611, *Catiline His Conspiracy.—*Ben Jonson.*

In meantime,
They are no less part of the commonwealth,
That do obey, than those that do command.
—*Catiline.*

* *Julius Cæsar*, *Sejanus* and *Catiline* were revived at Drury Lane in 1682, and were regarded apparently with favour as being anti-republican in their sympathies.

1611, The Tragedy of Chabot.—*Chapman and Shirley.*

The purpose of this play seems to be to show that the absolute monarch should respect the liberty of the loyal subject.

—*T. M. Parrott,* 1910.

Conspiracy Plays.

1613? Cæsar and Pompey.—*George Chapman.*

Cato, like Bussy, Biron, Clermont, Chabot and Essex, struggles with exterior and hostile forces, is beaten down and dies.

—*T. M. Parrott,* 1910.

1614? Bonduca (Boadicéa).—*John Fletcher.*

The lives of Kings rest in their Diadems,
And, ceasing to be Kings, they cease to live. . . .
Ye should have tied up death before ye conquer'd me.
If you will keep your laws and empire whole,
Place in your Roman flesh a Briton soul.

Dying words of the British Queen.

1619, Van Olden Barnavelt.—*Fletcher and Massinger.*

Examine all men,
Branded with such fowle syns as you now dye for,
And you shall find their first stepp still Religion.
" Gowerie " in Scotland 'twas his maine pretention,
Was not he honest too? his Countries father?

Those fyery Speritts next that hatched in England
That bloody powder plot and thought like meteores
To have flashed their Countryes peace out in a moment
Were not their barrells loden with Religion?
Were they not pious joust and zealous Subjects?

—*Words spoken by the 2nd Lord.*

1620, The Duke of Milan.—*Philip Massinger.*

A worthy thing it is to kneel and tell
Old stories, how great Pompey said forsooth,
And wisely too, that 'twas more honour far
To make a king than kill one.

—*Hernando.*

Academical Plays. 1607, *Claudius Tiberius;* 1624, *Tragedy of Nero.*

Scene.—The Actor's study in Palace Mansions.

[*The* Actor *is seated in an arm-chair near to a table. He holds loosely in one hand a tortoise-shell paper-knife, and in the other a society journal. He is in an attitude of reflection, his face expressing overwhelming seriousness. After a short pause, he mechanically raps the*

1920. **Duologue.*

* *Conversation between an Actor and Author.*

table twice with the paper-knife. Two slight raps are then heard on the outside of the door.]

1920. ACTOR : Come in !

[*The* AUTHOR *enters ; he wears gloves and spectacles ; his frock coat is buttoned up.*]

At last ! *Duologue*

AUTHOR [*bowing*] : At last !

ACTOR : I expected you.

AUTHOR [*bowing*] : You expected me.

ACTOR : Sit down.

[*The* AUTHOR *sits down cautiously on the edge of a chair ; he adjusts his spectacles, then, holding his hat with both hands, assumes an attitude of polite attention.*]

" What about our theatres? " is a question greatly exercising the world to-day.

AUTHOR [*repeating the last words in a tone of polite acquiescence*] : The world to-day.

ACTOR : I begin to see clearly that nothing has improved.

AUTHOR [*as before*] : Nothing has improved.

ACTOR : When I ask the reason I am told it is because nobody is responsible ; but if nobody is responsible, where is nobody?

AUTHOR [*off his guard*] : Nowhere !

ACTOR [*offended*] : You were saying?

AUTHOR [*alarmed*] : Forgive me ! [*Rises.*] Please continue.

ACTOR [*motions the* AUTHOR *to be re-seated*] : The fact is, our stage system is altogether hollow nonsense. We have farces, and plenty of them too, but no plays—no plays !

AUTHOR [*repeating as at first*] : No plays !

ACTOR : What is the good of a theatre in the
1920. midst of Society, if it is not to be a focus and centre for sweetness and light, and for diffusing and planting in the hearts of the people the ideas of beauty?

Duologue.

AUTHOR : The ideas of beauty.

ACTOR : Ah ! it's a glorious time for bad plays, and for bad actors, too, and how insufferable, to be sure, bad acting can be when a man does not get shot for it !

AUTHOR : Get shot for it !

ACTOR : There's that fellow Puffins. Well, he's considered a comedian, and by the aid of as much puffing as would serve to drive a windmill he gets the credit of being thought funny, but a man is not necessarily amusing because his friends throw up their hands in admiration whenever he utters the word damn.

AUTHOR : The word damn.

ACTOR : The man can't act any more than this table can. In fact, not so well, for this table acts very well as a table.

AUTHOR : As a table.

ACTOR : Then there is Muffins. Well, I admit that in his photographs he contrives to look like a tragedian. But Muffins is a relic of the Antediluvian Classical School; every word he utters can be heard at the back of the Pit. As if the sole object of going to the theatre was to hear a man spout. I can't endure the noise of

words—unless, perhaps, from a woman who is pretty.

1920. AUTHOR : A woman who is pretty.

ACTOR : As to Stuffins, he is the fashion, and you know there is nothing more in the fashion among women than to patronise a fashionable actor. If he only smiles the ladies form a favourable opinion of his talents. But Stuffins was not born to be an actor, and never will be one. He is serious, or at least, regards himself as serious, and that is all that can be said for him. *Duologue.*

AUTHOR : Be said for him.

ACTOR : I pass by Duffins altogether. He has talent but no influence. Nobody knows him ; he goes nowhere ; sees no one ; has no means, no views, no ambitions. What a lamentable life ! What self-preoccupation ! How little love of art ! You can't think how distressing it is to meet an actor who can talk about nothing but his salary. I think you have never seen me act.

AUTHOR [*bowing politely*] : Never seen you act.

ACTOR : I have been complimented on the parts I have played, but if you had only seen me in the parts I have not played.

AUTHOR : Not played.

ACTOR : It is not everyone who can act the part of Hamlet. The papers said I didn't look like the part ; but if I did not look like the part, what did I look like?

AUTHOR [*off his guard*] : Like yourself.

ACTOR [*offended*]: You were saying?

AUTHOR [*alarmed*]: Forgive me! [*Rises.*]

1920. Please continue.

ACTOR [*motions the* AUTHOR *to be re-seated*]: They said besides that I was indistinct. Idiots! Why, indistinctness is my forte. I refuse to adopt the tricks of the stage. To be taught acting! Pshaw! Be natural! Act like yourself. One should never be so carried away by one's part as to forget Nature. And yet there are actors who will calmly assume a voice that is not their own or in any way natural to them. Good Heavens! What can be more ridiculous than to hear a man holding a conversation on the stage in *borrowed* tones! Now observe my face, what does this express? [*Makes a grimace.*] *Duologue.*

AUTHOR [*hesitatingly*]: Despair?

ACTOR: No, it expresses peaceful resignation. What does this express? [*Repeats the same grimace.*]

AUTHOR: Peaceful resignation?

ACTOR: No, it expresses terror. And this? [*Repeats the same grimace.*]

AUTHOR: Imbecility?

ACTOR: No! That's smothered ferocity. And this? [*Repeats as before.*]

AUTHOR: Insanity?

ACTOR: No! It expresses joy. Let me give you my photograph representing the four expressions—my autograph is underneath—taken shortly after my visit to Richmond. That was a

very interesting occasion. I was asked to recite for the Duchess of Slough's Charity. I only
1920. mention this because some peculiarly ill-natured remarks have appeared in the Society papers with regard to my performance there. The Duchess, with a tact and taste truly becoming, *Duologue.*
remained outside the room until I had done speaking, and beckoned to those who were standing within the doorway to confine their conversation to a whisper. The Duke of Cumberland was much moved by a piece I was asked to recite called "How they brought the good news to Ghent." And Mrs. Clapstone told me that it was an unexpected pleasure to Mr. Clapstone to have such an intellectual evening. In one sense only was my visit to Richmond a disappointment. I had hoped to recite before the King. The prospect of reciting before the King was peculiarly pleasant to me. I was therefore doubly sorry when I heard that His Majesty unfortunately could not be present. And now to come to business, a vulgar word, but a very necessary one in a vulgar world.

AUTHOR: A vulgar world.

ACTOR: Nothing can be done in life without money. To begin, management without money would be rather worse than to, er——

AUTHOR [*off his guard*]: End it without money?

ACTOR [*offended*]: You were saying?

AUTHOR [*alarmed*]: Forgive me. [*Rises.*] Please continue.

ACTOR : Let me see, you are——?

AUTHOR : I am a writer of plays.

1920. ACTOR : Be seated, sir. [AUTHOR *sits.*] In fact, the more money, the more good; the less money, the less good. Can you keep a secret?

AUTHOR : A secret? [*Nods assent.*]

ACTOR : Positively?

AUTHOR : Positively.

ACTOR : Is your wife not in town?

AUTHOR : Not in town.

ACTOR : I intend to build a theatre. I am desirous to establish a theatre upon such principles of dramatic perfection and social respectability as shall be agreeable to those good friends of ours, the London County Councillors.

AUTHOR : The London County Councillors.

ACTOR : Now you are a dramatic writer, a man of ability, an intelligent man, a worthy person of sound common sense.

AUTHOR : Sound common sense.

ACTOR : Your experience is a recommendation for your success, and your abilities a guarantee for them.

AUTHOR : A guarantee for them.

ACTOR : Without any very great wrench of the veracities I may say that either I understand nothing about men, or that you are destined to accomplish a great work.

AUTHOR : A great work.

ACTOR Now I have told you that I am about to build a theatre, but I have not told you that *you* are about to write a play.

Duologue.

AUTHOR : *You* are about to write a play.

ACTOR : No! *You.*

1920. AUTHOR : I said you.

ACTOR [*pointing at him*] : Y O U.

AUTHOR : Spells *" you."*

ACTOR : You were saying? *Duologue.*

AUTHOR [*alarmed*] : Forgive me! [*Rises.*] Please continue.

ACTOR [*motions* AUTHOR *to be seated*] : *You* are about to write a play for *me.*

AUTHOR : For *me!*

ACTOR : No!

AUTHOR : No!

ACTOR : I must ask you please not to be unnecessarily discursive. Now you must understand that although the public care nothing for plays that are not pervaded with the practical ideas of the actor, it is not my intention to take upon myself the responsibility of authorship. No! Let everyone adhere to his own vocation. I am the actor, you are the author. We are approaching a profound subject. It was long before I was able to obtain clear ideas about it. I want a play that shall be something unlike anything that has ever been seen or heard of before. I have overflowing ideas as to the hero. He should be a compound of enthusiasm, talent, and melancholy. The man should pervade the stage, as it were for the good of the stage. But here comes in the difficulty : where shall we find an actor capable of doing justice to so exacting a part? I don't know who could act the part of

your hero. Puffins too trivial, Muffins too loud, Stuffins too affected, Duffins too inconsequential.

1920. AUTHOR : Yourself?

ACTOR : I ! ! !

AUTHOR : Ay.

ACTOR : You think? *Duologue.*

AUTHOR : I think.

ACTOR : But you have never seen me act.

AUTHOR : Never !

ACTOR : And can form no idea of my abilities.

AUTHOR : Except your natural ones.

ACTOR : Ah ! true. But then I have had but little experience. Still, I suppose I must not object to being temporarily inexperienced if by so doing I can be permanently useful. It is you who have the right to decide. I must adapt myself as far as possible meekly and modestly to the requirements of the author. Very well, then, that is settled. I take the part of the hero myself. Now what shall we call the play? Suppose we call it—eh? Yes ! You were saying——? Suppose we call it " Solitude " ! That is an appropriate title, I think, because the audience will then expect to see as much of the hero and as little of anyone else as it is usual for them to see on the stage. Besides, this title will enable us to make use of those exquisite lines of—er—my favourite couplet. We will insert it in the programme :

" Entranced in some diviner mood
Of self-oblivious Solitude."

AUTHOR [*repeating*]: "Of *self*-oblivious solitude."

1920. ACTOR: Words that at once suggest to us the posture of mind most congenial to our hero, who is a man in delicate health and knickerbockers. And, by the way, the scene should be a library, for the true object of all decoration is to express character, and what more appropriate to solitude than the bindings of old books? And then the internals must all be in character. The cast of Venus, of Apollo, and of the Graces—Ah! would it were possible to have the marbles themselves—must all be in *character.* The river, that is seen from the library window, wandering along the peaceful dale, must murmur in *character.* The nightingale must sing in *character,* and the patient ass, in the meadow below, must bray in *character.* I suppose we shall be able to have a live ass? *Duologu*

AUTHOR [*off his guard*]: Oh! there are enough of those and to spare.

ACTOR: I should prefer a live ass. And I shall want your hero to shed tears, for I was born with every capacity for tenderness. And I always declare that I will die like a gentleman in the middle of the stage, on a decent pillow, with my face illuminated by a green light, while an innocent and graceful girl is heard playing on an old piano in an adjoining room. There! now I must leave you. [*Rises and puts on a handsome fur-lined coat.*] We will discuss the other situations to-morrow. You understand my views

perfectly. I am confident you will give us a masterpiece.

1920. AUTHOR [*rises*] : What a handsome coat!

ACTOR : You like it. Made in Bond Street, the fur chosen by myself. So that is decided—*I* am to write the play, and *you*—— *Duologue.*

AUTHOR : And *you* are to act the hero.

ACTOR : No! No! I don't mean that. But you know——

AUTHOR : Yes, I know.

ACTOR : What do you know?

AUTHOR : Something of your superior intentions, and a good deal about your personal ambition.

ACTOR : You were saying?

AUTHOR : Forgive me! I was wondering why authors never go to see their own plays acted.

ACTOR : You are——?

AUTHOR : I am still a dramatic writer who requires a theatre for his play, players for his men and women.

ACTOR : Why, what is the matter with you?

AUTHOR : If I told you, you would laugh, and that would be a most tragic laugh.

ACTOR : Come, go with me. I will take you to my club, where we will lunch together, and then I will once more explain to you my intentions.

AUTHOR : Ah! that's an excellent idea. To digest the play *after* the lunch.

ACTOR [*at the door with a motion*] : After you, please, you are such a clever man.

AUTHOR [*motioning the* ACTOR *to precede*]:
But you wear the best coat, and everyone can
1920. see *that.*

[*Both attempt to leave the room at the same moment, and knock up against each other in passing through the door.*]

(*The right of translation and representation is reserved.*)

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